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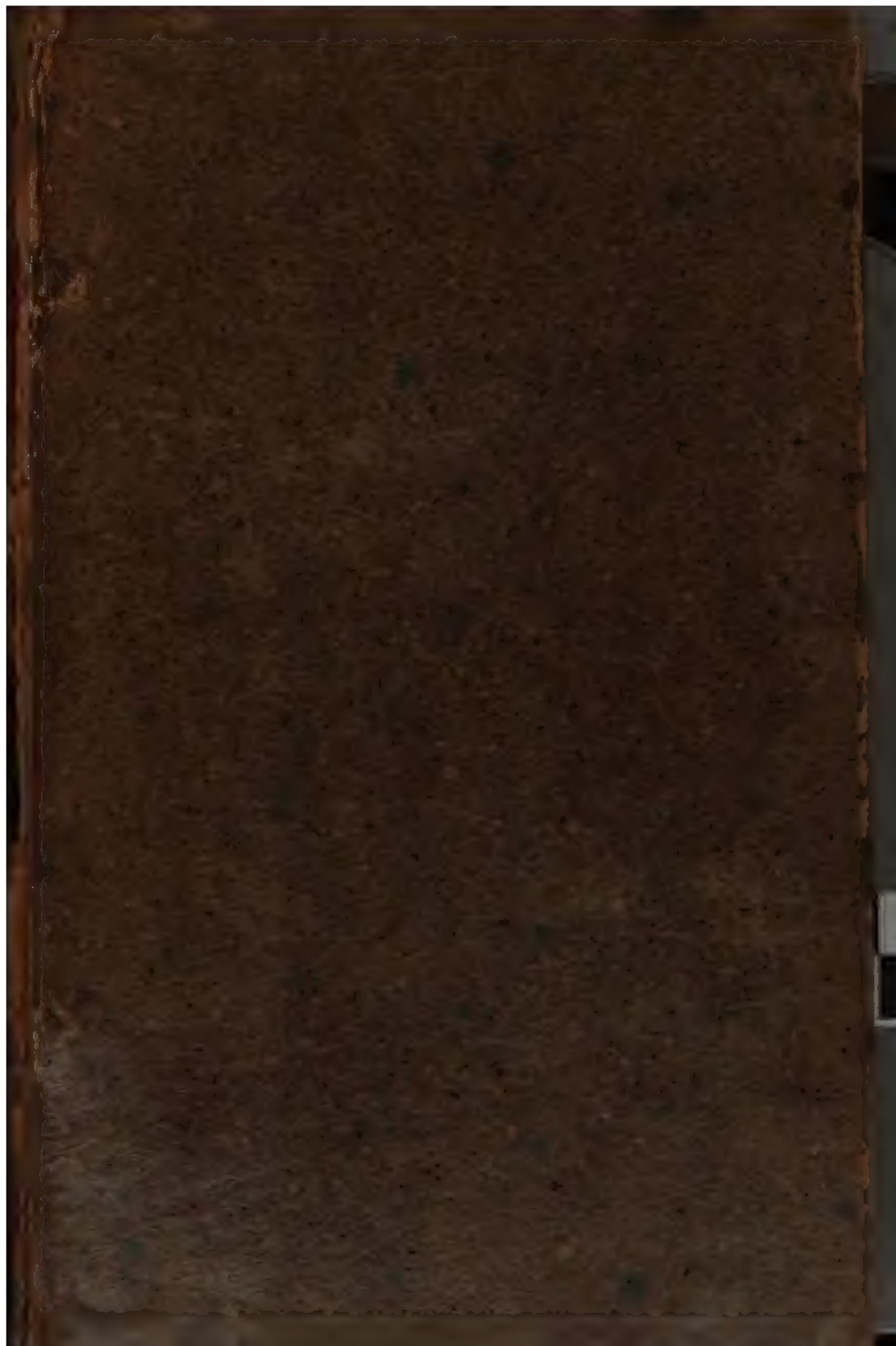
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*Joseph Wilson.*











# S E R M O N S,

ON

**DOCTRINAL, EXPERIMENTAL, AND PRACTICAL**

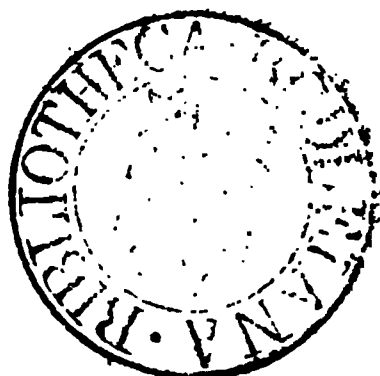
## SUBJECTS.

BY

**SAMUEL EYLES PIERCE,**

**LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT TRURO, IN CORNWALL,  
(NOW) AT THE MEETING, SHOE LANE, LONDON.**

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# SERMON I.

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## THE FOUNTAIN, SPRING, AND ORIGINAL OF CHRIST'S LOVE TO HIS CHURCH.

---

EPHESIANS V. PART OF THE 25TH, 26TH, AND 27TH  
VERSES.

*Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

THE grand argument of this most supremely excellent, spiritual, and divine epistle, is the doctrine of God's free grace, and everlasting love towards the elect in Christ Jesus; and the full, free, and complete redemption wrought out for them by their Lord and Saviour: in whom, as their head, it wholly resides, with all its blessings and benefits, for their continual use and advantage. All which, together with the internal secret operations and influences of the Holy Spirit, in their souls, as also on the minds and understandings, hearts and affections,

## 2      *The Fountain Spring, and Original of*

of the Lord's regenerated and called people, are clearly set forth : which subjects having been largely treated of, and finished in the three first chapters of it, the Apostle proceeds to give a whole body of spiritual, experimental, and practical divinity, as the true and proper fruit of the knowledge and belief of those great and divine truths : which, as brought home to the mind, and heart, by the Spirit of God, never fail of producing their own proper fruits and effects in the life, walk, practice, and conversation of such as truly know the Lord.

In the chapter, from whence I have selected my text, and towards the close of it, the mutual relation and duty, which subsist between believing husbands and wives are treated of. Marriage is God's institution, and is truly honourable in all. The wisdom and goodness of God are abundantly manifested in the ordination of it, as hereby he has provided for repairing the wastes of mortality made by death, by the production of new generations. The sacred writer begins at the 22d verse of it, with declaring the duty of the wife to the husband. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands." The manner of which subjection is described ; it is to be, "as unto the Lord." The reason also, why the wife should be subject to her own husband, is given, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church, and he is the Saviour of the body." In which words, Christ is spoken of under two distinct considerations. First, as an Head. Secondly, as a Saviour—the Saviour of his mystical body, which is himself, his mystic

self; who is one in him, and with him, “flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones.” The duty of submission to the husband, as unto the Lord, is enforced from the highest consideration, which is this, “therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be subject to their own husbands in every thing.”

Then the duty of the husband to the wife is declared, which consists of love. “Husbands, love your wives.” And this is enforced by the love of Christ to the Church, “even as Christ also loved the Church;” which love is most illustriously set forth in the text before us, after which Paul concludes, “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife loveth himself.” The reasons for the exercise of which duty, are further drawn from the Lord’s institution of marriage, and from the union which subsists between the husband and wife in that state. See verse 29, 30, 31.

It is most charmingly beautiful, to behold Christ shining forth in every part of Paul’s divinity, who, in every branch of it, makes him the supreme object and subject, when treating of the fundamentals of Christianity; so he also makes use of him throughout the whole system of his practical theology also: nor does he deliver any exhortation to any sort, or kind of duty, which respects either God or man, in any relation, case, or circumstance, but Christ is mentioned, and his love and salvation urged, as an incitement to it.

My design being to set before you the love of Christ, as expressed and contained in the words

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before us ; every part of which is inestimably precious, as it informs us, that “ Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” So I shall confine myself wholly thereunto, endeavouring to present to your view, a prospect of these divine realities, under the following heads or sections.

First.—As the Lord may be pleased to assist me, I propose to set forth briefly, the love of Christ to his Church ; which in the words before us is thus declared, “ Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it ;”—shewing this love of Christ in its original cause ; declaring and representing to the view of believers, the fountain and springs of it in himself, with this high and glorious expression of it, “ He gave himself for his Church ;” which is the fruit of his love, in the open manifestations of it.

Secondly.—I will consider the ends for which Christ gave himself, which were the sanctification and cleansing of his Church with his own blood : the means of which sanctification and cleansing are said to be, with the washing of water by the word ; by which expressions, the blood of Christ, and the everlasting Gospel, which makes known the eternal worth and efficacy of it, are intended.

Thirdly.—I will set before you the presentation which Christ makes of the Church to himself, as thus sanctified and cleansed : she, as such, being in his view, all glorious and beautiful. “ That he might



present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Having thus divided my subject, and given you the account which concerns the several heads and sections of it, I proceed to enter on the first part of it; in which it has been proposed, to set forth briefly the love of Christ to his Church; which is thus declared, "Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it,"—showing this love of Christ in its grand original cause; declaring the fountain and springs of it in himself, with this high and glorious expression of it, "He gave himself for his Church," which is the fruit of his love, in the open manifestations of it.

The love of Christ is, what his name, nature, and person is, *wonderful*! It is boundless and immense! flowing from his own heart; fixed immutably upon his Church, as the object of it; in whom he takes real satisfaction, and inexpressible delight. It is an eternal love; which, as it was in him from eternity, so it will continue in him, in its utmost vigour, to eternity, without the least abatement, or decay. It is a love, which had engaged the infinite mind and thoughts of Christ before time; in the contemplations of which, he enjoined himself, before the foundation of the world was laid, and which has drawn out his heart towards the objects of it to the very uttermost. It is a love, immense, intense, immutable, and divine! which, after all the manifestations and discoveries; together with the astonishing evidences which Christ himself hath given, and still continues to give, and which fills Saints in earth and heaven with

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the highest praises of it, yet it is incomprehensible ! which has puzzled, and will for evermore puzzle and perplex angelic minds, filling them with ecstasy and amazement ; and, it will be one of the highest subjects, for the Elect Church of human race, to be engaged in the contemplations of throughout the ages of eternity. It is a love, which, like the person, who is the subject of it, is, “ the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” Always in its utmost meridian and degree ; which can neither be increased nor diminished ; it is as durable as Christ’s essential nature, and as lasting as his throne. I will venture to give this as a definition of it ! It is the flowing forth freely of his affections ; the goings forth of his own heart, in love to his people, from everlasting to everlasting, and that with the utmost pleasure, to the utmost degree, and with the utmost delight ; which has been manifested in acts of grace towards and on the behalf of them from everlasting. It has shone forth with rays of celestial splendour and brightness on the Church, since her fall into a state of sin and misery, and been evidenced in the centre, circumference, or fulness of time, in so great a way, and in such a high degree, as to afford matter sufficient to fill saints in heaven with the most profound reverence of this lover, and his love. This most adorable lover, Christ Jesus, has for his love, an object and subject, which he esteems worthy of it ; for, in his sight and view, the Church is a perfection of beauty, excellent and comely ; his “ joy and delight ; his crown of glory, and royal diadem.” See Isaiah lxii. 3. She is united to him ; is in his heart, and set thereon as a seal ; wears his

illustrious name, Jehovah our righteousness. Jer. xxxiii. 16. She is his queen ; who, as such, is to sit on his right hand, because he delighteth in her. She is to be his social glory and companion in heaven, to partake with him in all his communicable blessings, grace, glory, blessedness, and felicity ; to behold his glory, and to be filled by him with all the fulness of God. But, as this grace is transcendent above the conception of saints and angels, any further than as their minds are supernaturally enlightened by the Holy Spirit of God, to take in and conceive of it ; so, I would try, not to sound the immense depth of this love, it being impossible, even in heaven, to do so ; but, to search out its high, and grand original cause ; how such love came to possess the heart of Christ, and fill him with infinite affection *towards*, and which caused him to take such delight *in*, his Church, that she was in his heart, to live, and to die for her. Let us then attempt to ascend the highest pinnacle in eternity, to find the primordial cause, which was this. It being the will of the Essential Three, to elect and predestinate the Second Person, into creature, being, and existence : who, as God-man, “ the first-born of every creature,” was the subject of God’s decrees, and the immediate and primary object of the love of the Co-essential Three. And, as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son, considered as God-man, to have life in himself. John v. 26. To be a fountain of life—of grace and of glory—which he was to be to his beloved spouse, who received her being, and well-being, from Jehovah’s free grace, and everlasting love. “ Of him (*i. e.* Jehovah the Father)

are ye in Christ Jesus." 1 Cor. i. 30. As Christ, God-man, was loved by the Father, as the supreme object of his delight, and complacency, which was manifested in the election of him; so he was predestinated for the dignity of himself, to be Jehovah's equal, the fellow of the Lord of Hosts. It also pleased Jehovah the Father, to elect the mystic bride and spouse of Christ, as the secondary object of his incomprehensible love, and to predestinate her for Christ, to be his glory. Election is the fundamental act, which contains both grace and glory, and by this glorious and incomprehensible act of grace, God chose the Elect Church, of human race, in the person of Christ, and presented her to him; set her forth before him, in her utmost glory and majesty, according to the uttermost purposes of his love and grace towards her; causing her to shine with excelling brightness and excellency before, and in the view of the God-man; giving him a prospect, how high she was, in the Father's everlasting love, view, and estimation; which representation of her, by the Father in eternity, in the glass of his decrees and purposes, drew the heart of the God-man towards her; opened his arms and heart to receive her; caused him to ask for the bestowment of her upon him, as one of the highest gifts, effects, and fruits of his Father's love to him. Thine they were, says Christ to his Father, and thou gavest them me. John xvii. 6. Valuing them highly as such, for that is the import of the words. And this may, for the substance of it, appear from those Scriptures which inform us, that God's eternal purpose, concerning all things, was

made in Christ, as God-man. Ephes. i. 9, 11 ; iii. 11. As also, from such declarations, which give us to know, that the Church of the elect, have an especial dependance upon the one Lord, Jesus Christ, as God-man. See 1 Cor. viii. 6. "And we," saith Paul, "are by him." The meaning of which is this, that the elect have a supercreation, being and existence given them by Jehovah the Father, in Christ Jesus: also, that they have supercreation, blessings, and benefits by him, which appertain to that being in him, all which flow from everlasting love; which love hath been manifested in choosing them in Christ before the foundation of the world; and which was God the Father's act, and is ascribed to him. Ephes. i. 3, 4. God chose, and gave the elect to Christ, as members to an head; he appointed him to be to them their head, husband, shepherd, and mediator; gave them to him as a pure gift to his person, for his honour, to be his fellows and companions; which is to be conceived as the very fruit of that original of all grace, election. Now, as Christ was loved in his election as God-man, the head of his body the Church, from everlasting; so, the Church also, as chosen with him, and in him, was loved with the same love, which was the cause of her election; and out of this supreme love, which was the highest that ever arose in the Father's heart towards her, she was given by him to Christ, as her heavenly bridegroom; even to behold, admire, and adore him, in his person and glory; as being "that," (says Dr. Goodwin,) "she was ordained for, more than for her own glory." Christ therefore, viewing the elect as his Father's be-



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loved, who, being admitted to know him as their head, how high they were in his Father's estimation and love; and he beholding them as the gift of his Father to him, to be his social companion and glory in heaven to all eternity, this was, and I boldly venture to pronounce it to be, the high, grand, original cause of Christ's love to his Church.

As a second section to this our first head, I proceed further to show and declare the fountain and springs of this love in Christ himself.

Christ, as the head of his Church, loves her as himself, and, out of pure affection to her, was united, given, betrothed, and married to her, "in righteousness, judgment, loving-kindness, mercies, and faithfulness." He is her eternal head, and she is his body. He is her husband, and she is his bride. He is her everlasting father, and she, in each, and all her individual members, are his children. He sustains towards her, all kinds of relation, wears all titles, and is engaged in all offices, to and for her. He has uttered himself, and given his heart vent, in pointing out to view, the original cause of his love to his beloved people, saying, "as the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." John xv. 9; which shews the fountain of his love, and the springs which feed and maintain it. As there is no change of the Father's love to him, as God-man, their head, and as their head; so neither, is there any change of heart and affection in him, towards them, as his mystic body. He also gives us a full view of the Father's love towards Christ mystical, when, in his address to him on her behalf, he carries the expression thus high,

“Thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” John xvii. 23. O wondrous love! ’tis an ocean unfathomable, which cannot be explored in heaven to eternity! An abyss, where all our thoughts are drowned! A love, which hath all dimensions ascribed to it; *length*, in regard of its eternity: *breadth*, in respect of its extent throughout all ages: *depth*, in regard to its being the motive of Christ’s delivering his people out of their low estate of sin and misery: *height*, in regard of its exalting us to an estate of heavenly happiness. This immensity of Christ’s love, is said by the Apostle, to be such as “passeth knowledge.” It cannot be perfectly, fully, and exactly known, either by men, or angels. As the Father’s love to him, as the head, and his love to the elect in Christ, is the fountain of Christ’s love towards them; so, the views of the union which subsists betwixt them and him; the relation they bear to his person, and the foundation of it, may be conceived to be, a fountain which feeds the heart of Christ with infinite delight, and which maintains the springs of his divine clemency towards them. Here, therefore, I would briefly recite some of those eternal designs of the Father’s grace towards his chosen ones, in Christ their head, from everlasting, which may serve, to open further the fountain and springs of Christ’s love to them, and his reasons for delighting in them. And here let it be noticed, that as election is the very fountain of grace, as it respects the act of it, from whence the whole originated, even in God himself; so more is implied, and included, in that act than we commonly conceive. Election, which was

an act of God's will, having singled out, and decreed us a representative being, in Christ, as members in an head; God, by predestination, which is an act of his understanding, ordained us to a glorious well-being in Christ our head, as the end which he meant to bring us to. God chose the elect in Christ, to have relation to his person; so that, as Jesus Christ is his beloved, God accepteth us, in him, in consequence of our relation to him as the principal beloved. As Dr. Goodwin expresses it, "A father, when he hath betrothed his son unto a woman, he loves her for the relation she hath to the person of his son; so doth our God." This acceptation of us, even of our persons from everlasting, is founded upon Christ's being beloved. And therefore you will find, that the love wherewith God loved Christ, and the love, wherewith he loved us, are said to be one and the same love. John xvii. 23. "That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." We were so represented by Christ, and considered in him, that we made up *one Christ mystical*; as the *head* and the *body* make up one man. And the Lord God, in election and predestination, ordained us to communion, and fellowship with Jesus Christ, in all things: (see 1 Cor. i. 9.) to partake of all his dignities, and whatever else we are capable of. So that, is he God's Son, personally, and essentially? We are God's sons by adoption. Is he Jehovah's fellow? We are called Christ's fellows, Psalm xlv. 7. Is he the first-born among many brethren? We are said to be the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in

heaven. Heb. xii. 23. And, as God, in choosing the Church in Christ, gave her a relation to his person, giving her being in him, and placing her in him, by election : so in accepting her in him, he gave her Christ, and a relation to him, to live with him, to have communion with him, and to be like him for ever :—which is, in the knowledge and view of Christ, a fountain sufficient to fill his heart with never-failing love to, and perfect delight in her. The constant exercise of his thoughts, on which, gives continual springs of pure affection and delight to his infinite mind, and which has been the fountain of all his mediatory acts, towards and on her behalf. I close this section, saying, let faith take, in a contemplative view of what hath been delivered, and it will be a key to unlock those deep expressions of Christ, which he himself hath uttered : in the eighth of the Proverbs, he tell us, verse 30, 31, that he was, as God-man, and head of his body the Church, “the delight of Jehovah, the Father, rejoicing always before him,” and adds, as that, which in the next place afforded him his highest joy, “rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.” Though the happiness of Christ, in the fruition of the Father’s love, was his ultimate blessedness ; yet it drew out his heart towards his darlings on earth, whom he loved out of love to his Father, and as considering them as his own peculiar portion, he says, “in whom is all my delight.” Psalm xvi. 3. And whom he addresseth also with words of rapture and astonishment, saying,

## 14    *The Fountain, Spring, and Original of*

“How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love for delights.” Sol. Song vii. 6.

I proceed to a third section of this first head of discourse, to consider this high and glorious expression of Christ’s love, mentioned in our text, “He gave himself for it.” In which two things are contained; first, what Christ did—he gave himself! Secondly, for whom? for his Church. “Christ loved the Church, and *gave himself* for it!” As his love, in its original cause, with the fountain and springs of it in himself, have been pointed out, and declared; we will briefly treat of the open fruit, and manifestation of it, in his giving *himself* for his Church: which expression contains an infinity of grace! For the gift exceeds the worth and value of all that is in the earth, and all that is in the heavens! He gave himself, his whole person, God-man, to be a surety for his Church:—gave himself in the fulness of time, according to his covenant-compact with his Father before time, to become incarnate: and being found in fashion as a man; having taken man’s nature with all the sinless frailties of it, into personal union and subsistence with himself: he gave his life for his people, for their service and benefit. He parted with all the comforts of life; endured all sorrows, sufferings, miseries, and pains, due to sin; humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross; undergoing and sustaining in his own soul, the whole fulness of his Father’s wrath and curse, due to the sins of his people. Never can we estimate this gift, no not to eternity! The inestimable worth of it, can

only be known to the *mighty ones*, who co-exist in the *self-existing essence*. This expression, "He gave himself!" is designed to set forth the proper and peculiar love of Jesus Christ himself to his Church. No other could so fully express his love, and the greatness of it; therefore it is used here, and elsewhere, as the greatest and highest expression by which it could be set out. Paul cried out, when his heart was filled as full with this love as it could be, "who loved me, and gave himself for me!" Gal. ii. 20. Christ gave himself, his whole self, to his Church, as her husband, and for his Church, as her Saviour. O what an inestimable gift! When he would give a gift, to express and manifest his love to her, he gave himself! a greater gift he had not to bestow. The Church was his peculiar care and delight, and he manifested it by this high expression of his love for her. I may close with saying, Christ's love to his Church, is the fruit of the union which is between him, and her. In loving her, he loves himself; in his thus bestowing himself upon her, he acts according to the very nature of that love, wherewith he hath loved her; and he is himself infinitely well pleased with all the expressions of his love, heart, and affections, which he has shewed at any time, in any of his acts towards her: which, as this leads to consider to what end he did thus bestow himself upon his Church out of his inestimable love; so this brings me, secondly, to lay before you the ends for which Christ gave himself, which were the sanctification and cleansing of his Church with his own blood: the means of which sanctification and cleansing are said

to be, with the washing of water by the word: by which expressions the blood of Christ, and the everlasting Gospel, which makes known the eternal worth and efficacy of it, are intended.

As it respects the ends for which Christ gave himself, even the sanctifying and cleansing of his Church with his own blood, the reasons for it were these: the elect, though brought forth into open being and creature existence, pure, holy, righteous, and perfect in their nature-head Adam:—yet being in him by creation-union, and representation; when he fell from God, and broke the covenant of works, under which they were, by virtue of the tie and obligation which was between the Creator, and the creature; they also fell, in him, and with him, into a state of sin, misery, and alienation from the Lord. Thus the spouse of Christ, became wholly unlike herself, and unlike her divine and heavenly bridegroom. So that instead of being perfectly, holy, and happy, she became in her nature-head, and inherently in herself, altogether unholy, and unhappy, being sinful and impure, having undergone and sustained an eclipse, of all her glory, as considered in her creation-head, by the fall; and through the loss of the moral image of God, in which she was created, in *righteousness and true holiness*. All which is most justly to be ascribed, to the mutability of the creature's will, who, as a creature, cannot but be mutable and liable to fall; which, as it shews that no creature hath whereof to glory before God; so it proves the absolute necessity of Christ's headship, to the end that by him the elect might be so united to God, as to be

beyond the possibility of hazard and miscarriage, or of falling finally from him ; as also, that by virtue of it, they might be blessed with supercreation grace, and glory. It is the sole incommunicable privilege of Christ, God-man, to have life in himself. “ For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” John v. .26. None, no creature, neither angels nor men, hath it, so as to be able to stand one moment of themselves : therefore he, having life in himself, because the human nature is personally united to him, as the essential Son of the Father ; so they, *i. e.* the elect, angels and men, if they stand and continue to have life, they have their standing in him, and receive their life from him, which flows from their supernatural union to him as God-man ; he being, as such, the foundation and corner-stone, which bears up and cements both parts of this great spiritual building. The fall of the elect of human race (in the decree of Jehovah) was subordinated for the glory of Christ, and it was thereby contrived to exalt and show forth openly some of the most supreme and highest acts, of free, sovereign, immutable grace. It was upon the foreviews of the fall, (and in the decree concerning it) concerted in council and covenant, betwixt the Eternal Three, that Christ should manifest his grace and mercy to his beloved bride, by raising her up from her fallen state of ruin, sin, and misery : who, by becoming incarnate, as representing her, was as her head, husband, shepherd, and redeemer, to substitute his person, in her law-place, room, and stead ; to bear her sins, spots, stains, de-



filements, and blemishes, by imputation, in his own body on the tree ; to sustain the wrath, curse, and stroke, of vindictive justice due to them, and to express his infinite love to, and unspeakable delight in her, by so loving, as to wash her from her sins in his own blood. Blessings, for ever, be ascribed to the God-man, Christ Jesus ! He had viewed his people in their original beauty, excelling splendour, transcendent excellency, and eternal ancient glory, as presented to him in the settlements of grace, in their marriage robe, and bridal attire, which united his heart to them ; kept it fixed from eternity invariably on them ; and so knit his affections from everlasting unto them, as was not abated, nor decreased, by the foreviews he took of their fall, and the sight he had of them when actually fallen. But, when they were in this low, vile, and abject state, his heart was drawn out in acts of pity and compassion towards them, saying, “ Surely they are my people,” and he became their Saviour, stooping so low for them and their salvation, as to *empty himself, to be cut off*, to have nothing left ; that he might redeem them out of the hands of law and justice, sin and Satan, death and hell ; and that he might cleanse and purify them from all the stains and filth they had brought upon themselves by reason of sin. It is among the mysteries of grace, such as belong to the deep things of God, that the elect, though they fell from God by reason of sin, through the fall of the first man, by means of their union to him and interest in him ; from whence they received and partook of the same equal corruption, and total ruin of their natures by

the infection of sin, with the rest of mankind : having in themselves the same fountain, spring, and principle of sin, which the very reprobate hath ; being *by nature children of wrath, even as others.* Ephes. ii. 3. Yet they fell not from the grace of personal election, nor from the everlasting favour of God ; nor did they lose their interest in their heavenly Father's love hereby. Their union and relation to the person of Christ, their eternal head, and interest in him, were not dissolved, nor impaired hereby ; nor did they cease to be the beloved of Immanuel's soul. Though they, by the fall, lost all that was given them in Adam as their nature-head, and nature-root, yet, the grace of election still continued the same as ever ; and Jesus Christ, their ever-living head, in whom is their spiritual, everlasting life, happiness, and glory ; was Alpha and Omega to them ; their beginning, their eternal spring, who, as such, broke forth towards them in their fallen state, and still continues his kindness in dispensing all grace to them, to whom it will be continued, with all its glorious fruits and blessings by him to eternity.

I proceed to a second section of this head of discourse, to shew the end why Christ took our nature, and became our surety and Saviour. It was, that he might sanctify and cleanse his Church with his own blood.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same : that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. Heb. ii. 14. The elect had contracted and brought a

frailty on our nature by the fall ; Christ took our nature, came into our world, to the end that he might take our sins to himself ; bear them in his own person as our sacrifice, and remove them from us as far as the east is from the west. The elect were by the fall blackened with sin, and so foul and sullied by it, that nothing short of Christ's own most precious blood-shedding could cleanse, purge, purify, and take out this black spot of spiritual and contracted leprosy : which, as a disease and accident, had befallen them. They were, indeed, in the whole collection of them, considered, notwithstanding this, by Christ, as his sheep, people, children, members, brethren, and church : he was by his Father's appointment a captain to them, to bring these many sons to glory which God had given him. This was to be accomplished by his being made perfect through sufferings. He was to give, and absolutely did give, his life a ransom for the many which the Father had given him. He was given to be the purifier of his people, and fulfilled all the conditions of the covenant by his life and death, thus purchasing the Church with his own blood. He bore the sins of many, with whom, and for whom, he confirmed the everlasting covenant. See Dan. ix. 27. All which acts were performed by Christ, in which he shewed forth and manifested the essential holiness and purity of God ; gave honour to the law, and satisfaction to infinite justice ; magnified all the divine perfections, which were most gloriously displayed in the contrivance, execution, and application of salvation. Christ, in the whole course of

his mediatorial work, as performed and finished by him here below, had the sanctification and cleansing of his Church, as the one object in view, and pursued it, in the whole of his life and sufferings, as his one grand end and design: which work, he having finished; by it, as the means, the end is obtained, the Church being sanctified and cleansed in his all-purifying blood: by the all-healing, purging, sanctifying, justifying, reconciling sacrifice which he made of himself, when he gave his whole person, God-man, his soul and body, in union with his essential deity, "an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour." *Sanctification*, which is here put before *cleansing*, does not denote internal sanctification, which is the work of the Holy Spirit, but, in this place, it means that sanctification, which is the sole fruit of Christ's sacrifice and blood-shedding. It is all one with that similar scripture which is recorded in the second chapter of Titus, verse 14. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Sanctification is indeed expressly attributed to the blood of Christ, in the thirteenth of Heb. verse. 12. just in the same sense as it is in the passage before us: the words are these; "wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." The sum of which is this: Christ, the head of his Church, as he gave himself for her, and represented her in his covenant engagements, personal obedience and death; so he had, in union with this people, been charged by divine justice with all their

sins, which met on him.—He sustained their crimes, which he atoned for, sweated out—bore off—and purged away; cleansing them, as his mystic body, from all their defilement, by his soul-travail, bloody sweat, sacrifice, and death: in whom, and by whose obedience unto death;—they are saved, justified, washed, pardoned, sanctified, reconciled, and brought nigh unto God:—shining forth in the eye, and before the view of infinite holiness, justice, and purity, everlastingly righteous and pure, in the obedience and atonement of the God-man, their head, and hope. I proceed to a third section of this head, proposing to consider the means of this cleansing and sanctification, which are here said to be, “with the washing of water, by the word.” By which expressions, the blood of Christ, and the everlasting Gospel, which makes known the eternal worth and efficacy of it, are intended, as will be shewn.

The blood of Christ, with the revelation of its perpetual virtue, and everlasting efficacy, as brought home in the promise of the Gospel, and applied personally to the individuals of God’s elect, by the Holy Spirit, is the alone means of internal, spiritual sanctification and cleansing; which is here expressed to be, “with the washing of water by the word;” *i. e.* as interpreted by Beza, “through the promise of free justification and sanctification in Christ, received by faith.” The blood, word, and ordinances of Christ, are in the Scriptures resembled to water, see Isaiah lv. 1. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Zech. xiv. 8. As water is of a cleansing nature, and purifying virtue, so the blood of Christ may, on that account, be fitly com-

pared to it, as it is the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, the property of which is to *cleanse from all sin*. The person washed in it is *clean every whit*. The Lord himself speaks of it and its virtue thus.—“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.” Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Christ's blood is a mystical bath. Spiritual washing in it denotes and includes, the acts of Christ, for us, and in us. As he hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; we are in God's sight without all spot and stain. There is also an effectual application of Christ's passion and death, made to our souls from the word, and by the Spirit of God, by which means we have an inward spiritual perception of the invaluable benefit of knowing for ourselves, that we have redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Our cleansing may be expressed to be, “with the washing of water, by the word,” to denote that the perpetual virtue, everlasting efficacy, and infinite worth of Christ's blood, is revealed in the word of the everlasting Gospel, in which it is set forth to our view, and by it as accompanied with the light and testimony of the Spirit, the dignity of our Lord's sacrifice is declared: The Gospel, being the Gospel of Christ, and everlasting; so it always gives the same testimony concerning the cleansing virtue of our Lord's propitiatory sacrifice, which, as believed, and constantly received by faith, perfects the conscience in the peace of God which passeth all understanding. An application of Christ's redemption

comes from the word through the Spirit, by which we have a true and real experience of its divine efficacy in our hearts, and minds.

This brings me, thirdly, to set before you the presentation which Christ makes of the Church to himself, as thus sanctified and cleansed ;—she, as such, being in his view, all glorious and beautiful. “That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” It is Christ’s dearest delight to view his beloved spouse, the Church, as she shines in the robe of his everlasting righteousness, and in the purifying blood of atonement shed for her ; in which she outshines elect angels in glory, being in her head and husband possessed of an holiness which is immutable, a righteousness which is of consummate worth and value, and a purity in the blood of her Lord, Redeemer, and High Priest, which excels theirs beyond all compare. He greatly delights in the beauty of his saints, in beholding them washed, sanctified, and cleansed in his own blood, from all their spots and defilements ; so that they are more immutably pure and clean in his view by being washed in his blood, which hath the virtue, worth, and efficacy of Godhead in it ; and as made white therein, than they could have been had they never fallen. Sin being by him as perfectly removed from them, as to the imputation of it, as though it never had being or existence :—and their persons, being so cleansed in, and purged by his blood-shedding, that they are without all fault, before the throne of God. It is a

matter of joy and delight to our Lord, thus to view his people, in his finished salvation without all spot, perfectly holy, righteous, and spotless in himself, and to say to them, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." And, as he viewed them from eternity, as presented by the Father to him, as worthy of his love and everlasting delight; and as he represented them, in eternity as their head, husband, and mediator, and also in the garden, and on the cross, where he bore their sins, and carried their sorrows; so having brought them nigh to God by his reconciling death, he presents them holy, and unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight. Col. i. 22. And in heaven, he, as their High Priest, represents their persons complete in himself; so that they shine in their heavenly Father's sight and view, with an effulgency of majesty, such as reflects a lustre, and adds splendour, to the mediatorial throne of Jesus, they being as so many stars to adorn his crown, to glitter in it, yea, to be his eternal excellency, his joy, and praise. At the last day, it will be his blessed act to present them before his Father, in their innumerable individuals, to give up this holy nation, this peculiar people, this royal priesthood, with the utmost delight, saying, "Lo I, and the children which thou hast given me."

But this, though the coronation day of the bride, the Lamb's wife, when the nuptials will be celebrated, and he will receive and admit her with great triumph into his Father's kingdom of glory; yet, it is not the subject of the words before us. It is a presentation *to himself*, not *to his Father*, that is



here spoken of, “That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.” It is, in my present conception of these words, the most genuine sense of interpretation to consider them thus : that Christ, as he views his Church sanctified and cleansed in his own blood, and clothed with the robes of his holiness and righteousness, beholding them as thus adorned, glorious, spotless, holy, and beautiful ; so he pleased himself with the knowledge and sight he hath of them, which intuitive knowledge of it, causes him to be continually presenting to his own thoughts and view, his Church and people, whom he hath set as a seal upon his heart, and upon his arm, to whom he says, “Thy walls are continually before me.” Also, that he exerciseth his thoughts and views with pleasure and infinite delight, how glorious his Church will shine forth, in him, by him, and through him, at the last day, and before his Father in heaven, to all eternity, when no spot, nor blemish, shall be found in her. When she, shining out in her robes of state, in her native hue and glory, will be a glorious Church indeed, worthy of the heart and delight of her Lord and Husband, who will spend an eternity in expressing his delight in her.

I would add to this, a glorious sentiment of Dr. Goodwin’s on this passage, which is thus expressed by him. “Great men’s wives use to wear their husband’s pictures on their breast, in that form and freshness they were in, when they were married to them, from which, in time they alter to the worse,

and grow out of that shape to which they were at first pictured in. But it is otherwise in this of Christ. He married thee at thy worst, when thou wert altogether deformed ; yet, he had taken a picture of thee, as thou wert at first presented to him by the Father from everlasting. The idea of which, and beauty thereof, had such an impression on his heart, and so struck with him, as he constantly carries it in his mind as that perfect holiness and glory, thou art to be restored to ; and that by means of himself, which is his glory as the author and recoverer of that beauty ; which he accordingly, bearing in his eye, as it is yet to come, or as it is yet to be his own work on thee ; so at last therein, to present thee to himself. And he, having these two pictures of thee, both of what his Father first presented thee to him, when thou wert given to him from everlasting, which made him first in love with thee ; and he having also the view of what he has done for thee, is doing on thee, and will perfect in thee ; this takes his heart, especially the latter, because it is his own workmanship ; as it lessens, if not altogether swallows up, the present thoughts of thy deformity, especially as he well knows that will continue but a short time."

I remember, when I was a boy, I saw these lines inscribed on a book :—

" No heart can think, nor tongue can tell,  
What joy there is where Christ doth dwell ;"

which I then applied wholly to being with Christ in glory. But surely they contain strict truth, as applied to the beloved of the Lord, in whose hearts

28 *The Fountain, Spring, and Original, &c.*

Christ dwells, with whom he makes his abode, and holds communion. To conclude, though the Church of Christ, believers in Jesus, are not in this life without spot or wrinkle, as viewed, in themselves; yet they are so, as considered in Christ, as viewed by him, in the presentation of them which he makes to himself; which is sufficient to yield them everlasting consolation. And the whole congregation of the elect, will one day be presented by Christ, and shine forth manifestively before him a glorious Church, all glorious *within*, being filled with all the fulness of God; and *without* too, being clothed in her raiment of wrought gold, having the glory of God to enlighten her, who himself will be her everlasting light and her everlasting glory. I add no more. May the Lord the Spirit, command his blessing, and dispense it by accompanying his word of truth to your heart. *Amen.*

## SERMON II.

CHRIST THE SACRIFICE AND PURIFIER OF HIS  
PEOPLE.

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HEBREWS IX. 23.

*It was therefore necessary that the pattern's of things in the heavens should be purified with these : but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*

**O**F all the articles of our most holy faith, there is not one which more closely concerns us, than that which respects the sacrifice of our most blessed Lord ; which is founded upon, and receives its perpetual and everlasting efficacy from the counsel, compact, and covenant, which obtained between the Father and the Son, before time began. In and by which engagement it was notified to be the will of Jehovah, the Father, that the sins of the elect should be removed out of the sight of law and justice, and be expiated by the most precious blood-shedding of the Lamb of God ; whose divine nature giving eternal value, and stamping infinite dignity, on the actions and sufferings performed and sustained in his human nature ; his offering of himself was worthy of the acceptation of the Father, containing worth and worthiness sufficient to give him content to eternity.

This subject being that on which the peace of God is founded and built, from whence cleansing from guilt, healing for our inward spiritual wounds, and pardon of sin proceeds ; by which eternal redemption is obtained, is therefore of infinite consequence. Upon the true knowledge of it, which alone comes from the word, and by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, our consciences are cleansed from sin, our minds relieved from spiritual burdens and distress, our hearts encouraged in the Lord, our souls led to triumph in Christ : yea, upon what we know of it thus in our own souls, all our hopes in God are founded, all our trust by this means centres in him. Consequently, whenever this most glorious subject makes a principal part of our worship, as it does on those seasons when we celebrate the Lord's Supper, and shew forth the Lord's death therein ; as also, when it is the supreme and chosen topic of a sermon, it is most requisite that the original from whence the mediatorial grace and efficacy of it flows, should be searched out and viewed ; that we, seeing the foundation, fountain, and spring of it, may rejoice in the Lord, and be exceeding joyful in him, as the rock of our salvation. The truth suggested receives infallible confirmation from what is written in this epistle, from whence I have selected my text ; which will, I trust, clearly appear to you as opened in our introduction to it. This apostolical part of sacred writ, directed to the believing Hebrews, I conceive it may be safely said of it, that it contains an epitome of the whole Bible, and is a compendious exposition of Old Testament Scripture ; containing

the whole substance and essence of it ; shewing that what was therein contained, both in figures, shadows, ceremonies, types, prophecies, and promises, was founded in Christ, received its being from him, and had its divine fulfilment in his incarnation, priesthood, work, office, and grace. As the whole quintessence of the Bible is extracted, and evangelically unfolded in it ; so you may take the outlines of it as relative to our text and subject thus : the writer begins with setting forth the essential, personal, and mediatorial glories of Christ, who is Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth, of angels and men ; whose essence is incomprehensible ; whose person and perfections are immutable :—who upholds heaven and earth by the word of his power, and who will one day fold up the heavens as a worn-out garment, putting stop to time by swallowing it up in eternity. Having laid so glorious a foundation, in the distinctive personality and essential deity of God the Son, to rear the superstructure on ; the sacred writer pursues his subject, shewing how necessary and suitable it was, that he who was to be a mediator between God and man, should be in his own person, both God and man, and proves that the divine and human natures were hypostatically united in Christ Jesus, who is both God and man. Having thus set forth Christ in his fitness, with his mediatorial fulness and abilities, he calls upon us to consider him as the Apostle and High Priest of our profession ; intimating, that all the eminency, dignity, and perfection of the highest offices and callings, spoken of both in the Old and New Testament, were contained in his : he being

both High Priest, which was the highest office in the Old Testament Church ; and Apostle, which was the highest office in the New Testament Church. He further proceeds, grounding all he has to say on the priesthood of Christ, whom he styles a great High Priest ; his dignity as such, arising from his being Jesus, the Son of God, whose call to his sacerdotal office, his being constituted a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec, was of, and from, his divine Father. See chapter v. verse 5, 6. He has the pre-eminency, and super-excellency of all the Aaronic order. His oneness and singleness in his office, with his solemn inauguration into it by his eternal Father, with the everlasting perpetuity of his Priesthood in heaven, is most divinely treated of, in the 5th and 7th chapters. After which, the super-excellency of the sanctuary, in which Christ exercises the acts of his priesthood, is declared ; whereby is shewn forth how much in this also he exceeds those who were but types of him ; they having but a worldly sanctuary, an earthly temple to exercise their function in, whereas, he has heaven itself, as the temple to exercise himself in the glorious offices which he is engaged in for his Church and people ; also, the excellency of the administration of the covenant to which it refers, is shewn. And thus we are brought to the chapter from whence our text is taken, in which the Apostle shews how the tabernacle, with its sacred furniture and services, were symbolical of Christ. As was also, the High Priest, and his entrance once a year into the holiest of all, which types and figures, received their accomplishment in our Jesus, who is

become an High Priest of good things to come. He then treats of the shadows which referred to the blood-shedding of Christ, and shews the necessity of his death from his being the mediator of the new testament, which testament being dedicated by blood, with every thing belonging to it, the book, the people, the tabernacle, with all the vessels of it. Nor is there any remission of sin, whether typical or real, without shedding of blood. So that, in a peculiar and most significant way and manner, Christ was set forth herein in his blood-shedding, sacrifice, and death ; which were to correspond with the typical blood-shedding and sacrifices under the law. Therefore, as it was necessary that the patterns and types of heavenly things should be purified with sacrificial blood, it was much more so, that the antitypes should be purified with the blood of him, who was the substance of all these purifications. “ It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these : but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”

In speaking from, explaining, and opening this scripture, I will first, aim to set before you, what is to be understood by the *patterns of things in the heavens*, and how necessary it was they should be purified with the blood of the sacrifices, which were sacred memorials and types of Christ's blood. Secondly, I will shew the nature of Christ's sufferings and death, that it was a sacrifice, and of all sacrifices the most excellent. Thirdly, I will shew the necessity of it, to correspond with its types and prefigurations under the law, for the expiation of sin, and



for the purification of the persons of God's elect, and their worship, that it might be acceptable before the Lord.

I am first, to explain, open, and set before you what is to be understood by "the patterns of things in the heavens," and how necessary it was they should be purified with the blood of the sacrifices, which were sacred memorials and types of Christ's blood. By the expression, *patterns of things in the heavens*, as it hath immediate reference to those sacred symbols and figures spoken of in this chapter; so it shews, that they were designed by the Lord to represent hidden, heavenly, spiritual, eternal realities; relative to Christ, his Church, and people, who himself was to sanctify and consecrate them, and to present them to his father; to purify them in his own blood, that they might offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. The purification shadowed out, and foreshadowed, by the types of Christ's purifying blood, evidenced the entrance of sin into the nature of man, which, as it introduced all miseries with itself into the human mind; this was not the least of its baneful effects, that it wholly corrupted the will, and put out all spiritual light in the understanding; so that immediately upon the fall, man lost the true and saving knowledge of the God-head, and of the personalities in it, and became from henceforward utterly incapable of being restored to a divine perception of God, and the things of God, without the favour of a divine and supernatural revelation. Therefore, it pleased the Eternal Three, after the fall, to reveal their covenant acts, engage-

ments, and designs, the beginning of which was in that great declaration, “the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head;” and to institute and appoint sacrifices, to shadow forth visibly, to the spiritual apprehensions of the faithful, what sin deserved; how extreme the wrath of God against it was; that it only could be propitiated and appeased by the substitution of a sacrifice of inestimable worth and value, by the laying down a life of far greater value than heaven and earth put together could amount to—a life exceeding in God’s own estimation the whole creation, both of angels and men! By which alone redemption could be obtained, reconciliation effected, peace made, pardon procured, justice satisfied, sin abolished, Satan conquered, heaven opened, and sinners brought nigh unto God. And that the original of this grace might be known, the cherubic hieroglyphic of the Eternal Trinity in the unity of the essence existing, and in their distinct personalities, as engaged by covenant and oath to act as purifiers, and to save the elect sinners of mankind by the blood of purification; was, as some say and think, set up at the east of the Garden of Eden, to express those tremendous solemn truths; and thus the sacrifices and cherubic symbol, were patterns of things in the heavens, of Christ who was to come from them, and be the fulfilling end of these sacred representations of him. From the fall of Adam to the times of Moses, the promise concerning Christ, as the serpent bruiser, the sacrifices and cherubic symbol, were the great Gospel and means of grace which the faithful in Christ Jesus then enjoyed.

When the Lord had brought forth his people with joy from Egypt, and his chosen with gladness, figurative of that great deliverance which would be effected by means of the everlasting covenant, he, by the ministry of Moses, sets forth before his Church and people his glorious grace more abundantly and comprehensively, in those sacred symbols, figures, shadows, and memorials of heavenly things, which the Lord gave the pattern of to Moses, when he admitted him to converse with him on the mount : Christ was in the whole of his mediatorial office and grace, hereby set before his Church, under that dispensation. From them the people were to spell, read, and behold, Christ as the substance of them. These were the means by which they were taught more clearly and evidently to know who the Messiah was to be ; also, what he was to do, suffer, and obtain. Thus their faith, by means of those visible exhibitions of him to their spiritual senses, was engaged in the expectation of his coming, and they had communion with him by means of those visible signs of him, as the Holy Spirit led them to look and contemplate the invisible, spiritual things, fore-signified in them. These types and memorials, which in my text, are styled, “ patterns of things in the heavens,” are specially, the sanctuary, candlestick, shew-bread, table, the ark of the covenant, with its mercy-seat, and cherubims of glory, the golden pot of manna, Aaron’s rod, which budded, &c. All which may be briefly viewed by us as symbolical of Christ, and figurative of his Church also, as united to him, one in him, and as having

communion with him. The tabernacle was a figure of Christ's body, in which dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead; who is with his people and in the midst of them, as the heart, life, and soul of all their spirituality, worship, excellency, and glory. The fine curious curtains, adorned with the cherubic emblem, of which the tabernacle was composed, may be considered mystically as expressive of the immaculate purity of Christ's humanity, of its perfection, graces, and sufferings. As the tabernacle was a symbol of Christ, so were the holy and most holy places with their furniture. The candlestick, which was a kind of chandelier, represented Christ the light of everlasting life. The table, with the shew-bread, set our Immanuel forth as the bread of God, the bread from heaven, the bread of everlasting life. The ark, with its mercy-seat, and cherubims of glory, which some style the figures of the great ones, or, the holy ones, or, the foederators, represented Christ, in whom is hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, who is the covenant head of his people, the holy one of God, in whose heart is God's law, who became obedient unto it, and is the fulfiller of it; yea, the very end of it for righteousness, to every one that believeth. The mercy-seat, represented Christ as the propitiation, whose blood hides all the sins of his people from the view of law and justice. The cherubims of glory, in their figurative and mystical significancy, are, by some considered as, expressive of the divine foederators, the representative or substitute of the Alehim of Israel, before which the blood was to be sprinkled on the day of

atonement, and the incense fumed above, or between the wings; of which symbolic figure, the Lord dwelt in a visible cloud, and spoke forth by an audible voice to Moses, his peculiar friend and favourite. The famous Dean Prideaux, informs us, that a Jewish writer, the author of the book *Cozri*, justly saith, that the ark, with the mercy-seat, and cherubims, were the foundation, root, heart, and marrow, of the whole temple, and of all the Levitical worship therein performed. The pot of gold, with manna in it, was a type of spiritual life in Christ, and from Christ, with its everlasting continuance, in, and by him. The rod of Aaron, which budded, was typical of Christ the priest for ever. The entrance of the priest daily into the holy place, to burn incense on the golden altar, and trim the lamps, was expressive of Christ's intercession for his Church, and of his walking amongst his golden candlesticks, the Churches, to supply them with the oil of grace, refreshing, quickening, and reviving them, as their needs require. As also, the High Priest's entrance into the holiest of all, with blood and incense, which he sprinkled before the faces of the cherubims, or, great ones, and fumed between them, that the cloud of the incense might cover the mercy-seat, figuratively denoted our Lord's entrance with his own blood into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us, so that from hence it may appear, that these symbols and services were patterns, or similitudes of things in the heavens. If it be asked, But how were they known to be such? and, how could Saints receive benefit and instruction from

them? I reply, they carried in them the stamp of divine institution, and authority, as much as baptism and the Lord's Supper do. It was expressly commanded, and again and again repeated to Moses, when he was about to make the tabernacle. "See," saith the Lord to him, "that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount." As neither baptism, nor the Lord's Supper, though both of divine institution, are solemnly commanded to be observed, can be of any use or profit by the bare legal observance of them; therefore it is requisite that their nature, end, use, and design, as set forth in God's word, should be explained by those who administer them, to such as are to partake of them: so neither could these similitudes of heavenly things, be profitable to the people of God under that dispensation, but as they received a spiritual explanation of them, and knew how to view Christ as set forth in them. And, doubtless, they knew the spiritual end and design of the Lord in those ordinances of his worship under the administration in which they lived, as well as we know his gracious end and design in those appointed for our use and benefit. To which let me add, that the holy Prophets, especially those who were peculiarly engaged to speak of the glories, and foretel the advent, work, and passion of Christ, explained and unfolded many of the mysteries of grace which were wrapt up in these mystical types and figures. Hence, many of the expressions in the book of Psalms cannot, to this day, be so clearly understood by us, as they were

by some of the Saints under the past dispensation, because the allusive phrases were so pertinently adapted to their earthly similitudes, which were patterns of things in the heavens. The Holy Ghost was pleased to give them to receive benefit, and instruction from them thus : as they contained Christ as the substance and meaning of them ; so the Holy Spirit caused the mysteries of grace, to shine forth in them, and he so enlightened the minds of his people with the knowledge of Jesus, by means of the word of revelation, which as it was agreeable with these representations, the one giving light to the other ; so the word of truth agreed with, and was entirely dependent upon that covenant of grace, which was thus made known, and Christ the sum and substance of that covenant who was thus set forth. Thus did the Eternal Spirit beget in their minds true, spiritual, and right thoughts, conceptions, and ideas of Christ ; giving them the true knowledge of his person, incarnation, obedience, sacrifice, office, love, and mercy, as set forth in these symbols and shadows ; which all shone forth in their spiritual nature, by means of the word of prophecy ; so that by these means, Christ dwelt in their understandings, hearts, and affections, as their hope of glory. Thus the Holy Spirit led them in worship spiritually to consider and contemplate Christ, by which means their souls were drawn forth to embrace him as their beloved, to breathe after his coming, to trust in him, and thirst after his salvation ; to rest their whole souls on his covenant engagements, on his future in-

carnation, obedience, and sacrifice, expressing their joy, in the views they had of its everlasting efficacy to take away sin ; and these similitudes became beneficial to them, as they viewed the true nature, end, and design of them in the written word, and the Holy Spirit led them to centre in Christ, the subject of all these similitudes, and the object of all their divine worship ; whom they, in the unity of the Godhead, with the Father and the Spirit, worshipped as God over all, blessed for ever.

*Amen.*

Having thus far been aiming to shew what is to be understood, or may be conceived to be understood, by *the patterns of things in the heavens*, I proceed to shew, how necessary it was, they should be purified with the blood of the sacrifices, which were sacred memorials and types of Christ's blood. The necessity of it was on the account of divine appointment, and that the types and antitypes might correspond ; therefore it was necessary, and therefore the tabernacle and its vessels were not only anointed with oil, but sprinkled with blood, as were the garments of Aaron and his sons, the book, altar, and the people : typifying how Christ, our High Priest, would have his human nature, as his priestly vestment, dipped, sprinkled, yea, dyed in his own blood ; and would sanctify, or consecrate himself with the blood of his sacrifice, that he might present himself, before his Father in heaven, as the perpetual intercessor and advocate on the behalf of his people. Just as, and corresponding with Aaron, his type, who was sanctified by the blood of the sacrificial



animals, before he entered on his sacred function ; so Christ may be said to have sanctified himself with his own blood, before he entered on the exercise of his priesthood in heaven, as his sacrifice preceded it ; when, in a mystical sense, all his garments may be said to have been sprinkled with blood. As the Church, and people of Christ were, and are the tabernacle of God, and were figurated and symbolically set forth and represented by it ; so the sprinkling the tabernacle and all its vessels with blood, shewed forth from whence their purification was to flow : that they, as vessels of mercy, as the elect of God, were to have their souls and bodies, worship, garments, and conversations, washed, purified, and made white in the blood of Christ. As the book, people, and all were sprinkled, when the Lord took the Israelites into covenant with himself, see Exodus xxiv. 7, 8. at Mount Sinai : so the covenant of grace was to be, and has been ratified, sealed, and confirmed, by the blood, and established by the death of the testator ; and his blood is the blood of sprinkling, so called in direct allusion to Moses's sprinkling the blood of the sacrificial victim, on the book and people, which, as sprinkled by Christ on his people, makes, and keeps them clean for ever, and which hath everlasting virtue to make and continue them pure to eternity. When Moses sprinkled the book, and all the people, he said, "*Behold the blood of the covenant, which God hath enjoined unto you.*" And our Lord, speaking at the institution of his supper, said of the cup, set apart by him in that ordinance, "*This is my blood of the*

*New Testament which was shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins.*" Further, it may be added, there was a necessity that the "patterns of things in the heavens, which were similitudes of Christ and his Church, should be purified with the blood of the sacrifices, which were sacred memorials and types of our Lord's blood-shedding on account of God's express command, and because of the uncleanness of the people. The institution and appointment of God was one grand reason of the necessity of it, and by it was continually shewn that, "without shedding of blood is no remission of sins." The things sprinkled being in their own nature earthly, though similitudes of heavenly things, were purged with blood of bulls and goats, but, these having been slain and offered in sacrifices, their blood was typical of the blood of Christ; which gave a legal virtue and ceremonial purity, unto it, so that it sanctified to the purifying of the flesh. To conclude this head, we learn from what hath been delivered, that the Lord revealed the mysteries of his grace and method of salvation in a way suitably to the economy of his grace under the then present dispensation of it. That, as he gave them signs and figures, to represent Christ, so he gave them his word to explain them, and his Spirit to guide them into the spiritual mysteries expressed by them. That their sprinklings, purifications, services, and atonements, were commemorative of Christ, whom they believed in, and looked for, to come and save them, by making his soul an offering for sin; to which I add, that when these services were rightly performed,

and arrived to their perfection, as they did in David's and Solomon's time, Christ, the slaughtered Lamb, was by them set forth as visibly slain and crucified, to the view of their spiritual senses; and the hymns and music, both vocal and instrumental, which were used by the Levites and trumpeters, when the daily burnt-offering was laid upon the altar, which continued all the while it was burning until it was wholly consumed: served, under the divine influence of the eternal Spirit, to inspire the souls of the true worshippers with very grateful feeling and affection to Christ Jesus, which led them to love, praise, and bless him.

This brings me to my second particular, in which I will endeavour to shew the nature of Christ's sufferings and death, that it was a sacrifice, and of all sacrifices the most excellent. As the priesthood of Christ supposes sin and guilt in the fallen nature of his people, so it contains his sufferings and death, as the cure and remedy thereof; the foundation of which was laid in the eternal purpose, counsel, and covenant, of the Essential Three: by which it was notified to be the good pleasure of Jehovah, the Father's will, to appoint the sufferings and death of his Son, to redeem, wash, purge, purify, and sanctify the elect—to deliver them thereby from Satan, the curse of the law, and eternal death—to acquit them from all sin, to make them righteous in Christ, and to bring them nigh to himself, by his blood. The mediatorial office and mediation of Christ, was decreed by the Father for the accomplishing these great and glorious ends and purposes, as the Scriptures abun-

dantly declare ; which ascribe redemption, reconciliation, the making an end of sin, and the obtaining peace and pardon, to the blood of Christ : who, in his sufferings, and by his death, is said to bear our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness, by whose stripes, says Peter, ye were healed. 1 Pet. ii. 24. God himself instituted sacrifices as types and memorials of Christ's sorrows and oblation ; for no other true reason can be given for the institution of them ; and Christ did really answer these types, and was used as they were. For instance, the Paschal Lamb, represented the sacrifice of Christ ; hence the Apostle saith, Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us. 1 Cor. v. 7. In allusion to which, Christ is often called *the Lamb*, as also in reference to the lambs offered in the daily sacrifices, though more peculiarly in relation to the Paschal Lamb, which did more fully express, both the nature of his sufferings, and the design of his office. As the sacrifices under the law were types of Christ, so all their virtue and efficacy depended on, and flowed from, the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, who by his covenant engagements with the Father, became responsible to offer himself, in the fulness of time, as the antitype of all the ceremonial sacrifices ; in and by which, the sacerdotal work of Immanuel was most emphatically expressed. The sacrifices under the law, were vastly expressive, and significant, being full of Christ. As for example : the person who did institute, ordain, and appoint them, was the Lord God himself. The person to whom they were to be offered, was Jehovah Alehim, the

holy one of Israel. The persons, who were to offer them, were the priests, to whom, by divine appointment, this work was committed. The matter of the sacrifices, and things offered, was various. Now, answerable to all this, we may observe, that Jehovah Alehim, instituted, appointed, and fore-ordained Christ to be the sacrifice to take away sin. That Christ, the Messiah, the consecrated one, whose name is the most holy, see Dan. ix. 24. offered up himself. That he was a priest, who, as God-man, mediator, was engaged in this offering up of himself. That he was also the sacrifice, who made a formal and proper oblation of his whole person in the garden, and on the cross; which was offered upon the altar of his essential Godhead, which sanctified it, and made it everlastingly acceptable to the Father. It may further be said, in these expiatory sacrifices under the law, whatever was laid on them; it was for the sins of the people, as the impulsive and meritorious cause thereof. So it was with Christ in his sufferings, the Lord laid on him, the iniquities of his people, and Christ became their sacrifice, as he took their sins unto and upon himself, and bore them in his own body on the tree: thus he substituted himself in their law-place, room, and stead, and gave himself for them, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour; so it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief. As the law sacrifices were substituted in the place and stead of offenders themselves, bearing their sin and punishment; so it was with Christ, in relation to elect sinners. As these sacrifices were to be offered up,

killed, slain, and consumed, in which way and by which means they became expiatory ; so it was with Christ, his soul underwent the shock, storm, and fire of divine wrath, he was *emptied*, cut off, and died the death, due to sin.

As by those sacrifices God's wrath was averted, expiation made, and remission of sin procured, in a typical way ; so by Christ, all this is eternally completed, and secured. We proceed further to shew how Christ's sufferings and death were a sacrifice, and of all sacrifices the most excellent ; as Christ's sufferings and death, were appointed as a remedy for sin, so as to be equal to the demerit of it ; yea, to transcend the utmost guilt and filth contained in it ; to give full satisfaction to the highest requirements of infinite holiness, and the utmost demands of inexorable justice ; and to lay a foundation for the manifestation of the highest honour, and glory, which could result, to Godhead, from the obedience and death of this all-glorious mediator. The essential Son of the Father, as God-man, the head, husband, surety, and representative of his people, was to take away their sins, by submitting to be in that state and condition, whereby this might be effected. To this end he took our nature into personal union with himself, was born into this world, and that in a poor and low condition, appearing in the likeness of sinful flesh ; he was circumcised as though he had been born in sin, and his mother was purified by the law-sacrifices, according to the Mosaic ritual, as though she had conceived him in sin ; all which, as it made him in all things like unto his Jewish

brethren, sin only excepted ; so it proved him to be, and pointed him out as the Lamb of God, who from his conception and birth, began to take and bear away the sins of the elect, even to an utter abolishing of them, out of the sight and from before the Lord, as he hath completely done, by the sacrifice of himself. Mr. Romaine, as indeed Mr. Hutchinson did before him, for the former was not the original of it, applies the 51st Psalm to Christ. And those words in it which we thus read, “ Behold, I was shapen in iniquity ; and in sin did my mother conceive me ;” he renders thus : “ Behold, I was shapen for iniquity, *i. e.* to bear iniquity, and for a sin-offering did my mother conceive me ;” which, as it contains an important article of Gospel truth, so it is strictly consonant with the analogy of faith, and no reasonable objection can be made against such a translation of the passage : yea, such a reading, would lead most clearly to view Christ in his conception and birth in the designs thereof, as a Saviour. Perhaps, nothing but the general idea and natural conceptions of the mind, that it was wrote by David to lament and bewail his foul fall, will prejudice any believer against this gloss of the passage. I think I may venture to say, that it is altogether our mistake, and not the title of this psalm, which is canonical Scripture, which leads us off from considering the genuine design of the Holy Ghost in it. This you all know is the title of it : “ To the Chief Musician, a Psalm of David, when Nathan, the Prophet, came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.” Now I do not positively affirm it, but only ask, if it is not most

probable, that this title refers to the 12th chapter of the second book of Samuel, verses 24, 25 ? In which we read, “ And David comforted Bathsheba, his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her : and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon, and the Lord loved him. And he, (*i. e.* the Lord, sent by the hand of Nathan, the prophet, (a message to David, concerning this his son, that he was the object of everlasting love, and a type of Christ ;) and he, (*i. e.* David, upon these accounts) called him Jedidiah, *i. e.* the beloved of the Lord.” Does not this seem, at least, a probable interpretation ? that upon the conception and birth of Solomon, of whom Jehovah had spoken and fore-signified him to be a type of Christ long ere this (see 2 Sam. vii. verses 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.) which sacred prophecy was given, and had been from the Lord delivered by Nathan, to the king, that now upon the actual accomplishment of it, Nathan coming in to David to inform him from the Lord of the sacred fulfilment hereof, in the birth of Solomon ; the Psalmist was led to open this scripture mentioned, with a direct view to Christ, whose conception and birth, though without all spot and stain of sin, was ordained for the great purpose of taking away sin, both original and actual, from his people ? And to this I add, that as Christ in his whole life submitted to the ceremonial law, one end of which, says Dr. Goodwin, was to be a public confession of the people’s sinnership, and their need of a mediator ; so thrice a year he came to the festivals, and used those psalms in which are contained confessions of sin, which suited him in the



exercise of his office, it being natural for the head to use the tongue on behalf of the body, and why may we not conceive he used the fifty-first, as well as any other?

As Christ died as the surety of his people, in their room and stead, so his fear, Heb v. 7. his strong crying and tears, his astonishment, consternation, agony, dereliction, and sorrows, contained in them the desert of sin, and were produced in him by the curse and wrath of the Father which came in upon him, which filled his soul with heaviness even unto death, and penetrated his mind with the most lively and piercing sorrow, so as to be overwhelmed with the load, and all this was the effect of his becoming a sacrifice for his people: who, as he was made sin for them, was also made a curse for them, by overcoming which, he obtained eternal redemption. His sacrifice containing all the worth of his person, exceeds all others, is of perpetual virtue, and everlasting efficacy, and will give rest, content, and complacency, to Jehovah, the Father, throughout time and in eternity. For, it is expressly said, that Christ hath put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself. Heb. ix. 26.

This brings me thirdly, to shew the necessity of it, to correspond with its types and prefigurations under the law, for the expiation of sin, and for the purification of the persons of God's elect and their worship, that it might be acceptable before the Lord. The necessity of Christ's offering up his human soul and body, in union with his divine person, as the great all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins

of his people, arose from the counsel, decree, and covenant, of the Trinity concerning it ; from the promises and prophecies respecting it ; also from the types and figures which were shadows of it ; and likewise, for the final expiation of sin. By which offering, all the sins of the elect are for ever removed from their persons, hid from the eye of God's justice, and completely blotted out and cancelled : so that believers may sing, " as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath : thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger." As the sufferings and death of the Messiah did exactly correspond with its types and prefigurations under the ceremonial law ; so Christ hereby became the end of it, as well as he is of the moral law as a covenant of works ; as in his person, obedience, and atonement, it received its final accomplishment. By the sacrifice, blood-shedding, and expiation made by Christ, all the types and prefigurations of it under the law were completed, and all the persons of the elect were washed, cleansed, purged, and purified from sin ; and in this mystical washing away of their sins by the sacrificial blood of Jesus, and by virtue of their souls and bodies being washed in that bath ; they are in God's sight everlastingly clean, pure, and faultless, for the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin. It should be attentively reflected on, being of vast importance in real experience, to consider how Christ and the elect are one ; that they

became so by virtue of that incomprehensible, eternal act of Jehovah, the Father, his choosing their persons in Christ before the foundation of the world ; by which act of election, they were in him from eternity, united to him as their head, related to his person, and in him they were heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ, in all the blessings of grace and glory. Upon the foreviews of the fall, he, as their head, undertook to become their Saviour ; saying, as within himself, “surely they are my people,” “my children :” as they certainly were, he standing in the relation of an everlasting Father unto them. And by his precious incarnation, by which he took hold of their nature, as also, by his own consummate obedience, and death, he, as united to them, and representing them in the whole of his mediation, was made their sin, which he made an end of ; for by his stripes they are healed. Though a sinful nature still remains in them, and they are still the subjects of it ; yet in Christ they are washed, sanctified, and justified, and are brought nigh unto God, being presented by their Mediator, in his all-cleansing blood, more pure and spotless, than elect angels are in heaven. All the whole mystic body of Christ, both in earth and heaven, for a part of that body was in heaven, when Christ wrought out a purgation for their sins ; I mean, Old Testament Saints, who died before Christ’s coming in the flesh ; and though it may be the greatest part is still on earth, yet the whole is purified, justified, and sanctified by the blood of Christ. The heavenly things themselves, the people of God, some of whom are in heaven,

and some on earth, and were represented by earthly similitudes under the law, are purified from sin with better sacrifices, than the emblems of them were. Christ's sacrifice, though but one, is yet here expressed in the plural number ; because of the infinite completeness and eternal duration of it : which one everlasting sacrifice under the New Testament, is instead of, and is also the accomplishment of the several ones under the Old, to which they all referred, and by the offering of which, they are all superseded and annihilated. Upon the foundation of which, all the worship of God is carried on, which is truly and spiritually performed, either in heaven, or earth. As Christ is entered into heaven with all the treasury of his blood and oblation ; so he appears there in all his personal glories, royalties, perfections, and excellences ; with the whole fulness of his personal worth and dignity, and is consecrated, as one sweetly expresses it, "to be the open temple of spiritual service," in whom, and by whom, all the worship of Saints in glory is carried on, offered, and presented before the Father, it being in the person of the Great Mediator, they draw nigh unto God. Jesus, as God-man, is the grand ordinance of heaven, his appearing as the everlasting righteousness and sacrifice of his Church, is the foundation of worship even to Saints within the veil ; the full views they have of him by sense and vision, continue everlasting holiness, purity, and bliss in their souls ; and they glory in him, the slaughtered Lamb, saying, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." And, Jesus, as God-man Mediator, is the

object, foundation, fountain and spring, of all spiritual worship, performed by the Church in her militant state here below. As the people of God are all sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ; so it is in his person, they are acceptable in the Father's sight, and before him : it is in his righteousness they are made the righteousness of God : it is in his blood and by his soul-travail they are, as considered in him, and interested in his infinitely and everlastingly efficacious sacrifice, purer than heaven itself ; they being not only washed and purged, but purified also hereby : in consequence of which, the Holy Ghost consecrates them to be spiritual sacrifices unto God, and keeps them by Christ, and in the faith of him, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. Upon these accounts it is, as I conceive, that Romaine used to say, every service performed by faith was as acceptable to God, as any service performed in heaven. To conclude, our whole redemption, with all the blessings of it, is wrought out, procured, and established in the blood, sacrifice, and death of Christ. The heavenly or spiritual things being purified with that sacrifice of his. So that, to whom the Spirit of Christ is given, they may draw nigh unto God with boldness by faith in the blood of Jesus. Such should consider the great excitements given them in, and by, the mediatory work and office of Christ, to draw near the throne of Grace with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, in the Father's perfect delight and acceptance of our Immanuel's sacrifice. May this be your case. Oh ! that the Holy Spirit may teach you at all times to pray,

in the full views of Christ's having made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness ; and that your God and Father is ever beholding you, and accepting you in the person of your glorified and crowned Saviour ! May you learn to leave your prayers with him, to offer your persons and praises daily on the Altar Christ, who sanctifieth the services and worship of his people. May the Lord Jesus say, *Amen* to it ; even so, blessed Saviour, for thy great name's sake, to whom with the Father and Spirit, we ascribe all the glory of present and everlasting salvation. *Amen.*

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## SERMON III.

ADAM, IN HIS FIRST AND PURE ESTATE, A FIGURE OF CHRIST, IN HIS HEADSHIP TO HIS CHURCH.

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ROMANS V. 14.

*Who is the figure of him that was to come ?*

**I**N the beginning of this epistle, the Apostle sets forth the corruption and detestable practices of the Gentiles who knew not God ; and proceeds to shew the sinfulness of the Jews also, who were favoured with the oracles of God ; yet they by their sins and

immoralities blasphemed, or caused to be blasphemed, that worthy name by which they were called. He then goes on to shew and prove from various passages taken out of and quoted from the Old Testament, that the whole human race, both Jew and Gentile, are wholly sinful, lost, and fallen. "All having sinned, and come short of the glory of God, and by the deeds of the law shall no man living be justified." In this chapter from whence our text is taken, we are informed how sin entered into the world, and death by sin: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that, or in whom, all have sinned." When we view the universal corruption, apostasy, defilement, and sinfulness of human nature, which is so deep as to be inlaid as well as communicated into our very conception, and which sinfulness resides, dwells, infects, and spreads its baneful influences over all the faculties of our souls, and corrupts every member of our bodies; it seems natural for us to inquire how man's nature, which, as created by the Lord, was pure, holy, righteous, and good; became defiled, ruined, sinful, and impure, which the Scriptures declare it to be, and which we in each and every one of our experiences find it to be? For in this truth all mankind, good and bad, saint and sinner, unite, and the universal experience, thoughts, words, and actions of all men, prove this undeniable truth: that we are inherently sinful by nature, and of and from ourselves prone and inclinable to sin. The words of the 12th verse in the chapter before us, give us the

following account, that sin entered into the world by one man, who was then the only man in it, and death by sin. In this one man, all mankind were ; he being their head, root, and foederal representative ; in whom they were all by creation, and from whom they were all to proceed and descend by natural generation, they being all in his loins, and hanging at his girdle : so that what he did as their foederal head, reached and affected them. He by his own first act of personal transgression made them sinners, and by the defilement of his own nature, in consequence of his transgressing the law of God, poisoned all their natures, defiled their affections, corrupted their wills, and ruined all their faculties ; opened the sluices whereby sin, with all its train of evils, which were the fruits and effects of it, and which most justly and righteously accompany it, still remain, and are continued. “ Wherefore, by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men ; for that all have sinned.” Before Jehovah gave the moral law upon Mount Sinai, sin was in the world, which fully appeared by the tremendous effects which followed as the fruits of it, and accompanied mankind as the subjects of it. And sin, being a transgression of the law, there had been a law given, which contained the true, holy, and righteous will of God, before the same law, for the substance of it was given to Moses ; and the reason which the Apostle gives is invincible : “ For sin is not imputed where there is no law.” Now if there had been no law, all that space of time from the creation to the Sinai



transaction, then sin could not have been charged upon men, so as to make them liable unto death. But sin was charged upon them, for death passed upon all, even infants. “ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.” Being thus brought to the words of our text, I will endeavour, as the Lord shall be pleased to direct and assist, to treat on them in the following method and order, by considering, in the first place, that Adam was the common root, and the public head of the whole human race, as Christ is the common root, and public head of all the elect ; and that Adam was a type, or figure of Christ, to shadow forth his headship to the elect, which are his seed and spiritual offspring. Secondly, I will consider Adam in his very creation, and formation, as an image, type, or figure of Christ, who was to come. Thirdly, I will aim to shew you from the scriptures of truth, that Christ, as God-man, was ordained, constituted, and appointed to be the head, root, and founder, of a supernatural condition to the elect, who were chosen in him before the world was, without and beyond the consideration of the fall.

And lastly, I will conclude with shewing how our ALL is completely and eternally secured in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have proposed, and am first to consider, that Adam was the common root, and public head of the whole human race, as Christ is the common root and public head of all the elect ; and that Adam was a

type or figure of Christ, to shadow forth his headship to his elect, which are his seed and spiritual offspring. The words of our text plainly affirm, that Adam was a figure of him that was to come. And Paul thus speaks, when he is comparing *Adam* and *Christ* together, as they were both of them public persons, one the type, the other the antitype, and both common roots, and public heads to their respective seeds, and as conveying natural, and spiritual life to such as belong to them. It is true, that in this scripture before us, and in what follows it, the comparison between *Adam* and *Christ*, is in this one great and important particular, *viz.* in Adam's conveying sin to all his posterity, as he fell and became a sinful and apostate head, wherein he typified out Christ that was to come, who conveys righteousness to all the elect ; and as Adam conveyed sin, guilt, corruption, and misery, to all who were in him by creation and union ; so Christ conveyed life, grace, salvation, and blessings, to all that are in him by God the Father's election, who, in consequence of it, are united to him, and belong to him. Adam, as fallen, is the fountain, head, and root, of sin and misery, to all his seed and offspring ;—and Christ is the fountain, head, and root, of spiritual life, grace and salvation, to all his spiritual seed and offspring. If it be inquired into and examined, why all sinned in Adam, and why his act of disobedience made all sinners ? It was because he was a public person, representing and acting for all mankind. So that the main ground of the Apostle's comparison here before us, of Adam and Christ, lies in this, that both of them, as public

persons, were two roots and heads, and so *Adam* was the type of *Christ*, who was also to come, and be a common head and root, as *Adam* was also. Now, if it be asked, when did Adam become a common head first? Was it not the moment before his sinning? I answer, yes. He was such before in the state of innocency. For he had not in justice been a public person in sinning, if he had not been such in standing. He had not been such for evil, if he had not been such for good. He was a public person in sinning, because he had, in innocency, been so considered by God. As in creating Adam, God created all mankind, and in blessing him, he blessed all mankind; so God speaks in the Scriptures of *Adam* and *Christ*, as if there had been but those two men in the world, calling one, the *first Adam*, the *first man*; the other, the *second Adam*, the *last man*; because these two stood for all the rest. See 1 Cor. xv. 45. "The first man, Adam, was made a living soul, the last Adam, was made a quickening spirit." Upon which Dr. Goodwin thus expresses himself: "Adam, when he was first made, was not made as a single man, he was made a *living soul*. What is that? To be a public person, to convey life to others, as well as to have life personally in himself. That is the meaning as appears by the following words, the *last Adam*, *i. e.* Christ, *was made a quickening Spirit; i. e.* not to himself, but to others."—He further says: "In God's first decree to create Adam, he must needs have ordained him withal to be a common person; and therefore at the instant before, or at the time when God made Adam,

he says, Gen. i. 26. *Let us make man* (it is in the Hebrew, *Adam*,) *according to our image*. In which words *Adam*, or *man*, in the singular number, is put for all mankind, even as in that promise, Gal. iii. 16. it is observed by the Apostle, that he had said, ‘not unto seeds, as of many,’ a part of themselves, ‘but *to seed*, as to one,’ a public person, for all the rest; which seed was Christ, as surely to come after him, as Adam was then come already. God not only appointed Adam to be a public person, to convey to his posterity, what he should do, or be; but also to be a type of another Adam, that was to come after him, even our Lord Jesus Christ, who being aimed at by God, and shadowed forth in the history of Adam; whereupon it is that the Apostle sets the one against the other, as the type, and antitype.” But my chief design, in this discourse, being to set forth some supra-lapsarian truths concerning the person, headship, and glory of Christ as God-man; I proceed, secondly, to consider Adam in his very creation and formation as an image, type, or figure of Christ, who was to come. Which, if the Lord will be pleased to shine upon the intention and design, and enlighten, enliven, and enlarge, in prosecuting this head, some of the ancient and primordial glories of the God-man will shine forth upon us, and be revealed to us. So it is, indeed, even with real Saints, that they are not apt to look for Christ in the volume of the sacred pages, beyond the third chapter of Genesis, and 15th verse; and I doubt not but at the first item of it, that the creation and formation of Adam, the consultation of the Eternal Three concerning

him :—Eve's being formed out of one of his ribs, brought by the Lord to him, presented before him, and given and united in marriage to him ; that all was a shadow of Christ and his Church, may seem fanciful, strange, rather invention, than what is solidly to be proved from, and grounded on the word ; we being forgetful of what Paul says concerning the marriage of the first man and woman : “ For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father, and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery : but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.”

Sirs ! you conceive and are not at all afraid of taking in this truth, but readily assent and consent unto it, that all the types, symbols, and shadows of Christ, under the Mosaical economy, were emblematical of what Christ was to be, and to do, and to suffer. If they were, as no doubt can remain in any mind enlightened by the Spirit of God, but they were emblems of Christ, then they must owe their original to the archetype drawn in the counsels of the Most High ; so likewise it may be safely said, and conceived, that Adam's creation was a figure and type of Christ, the God-man, in whose image, and after whose likeness he was made. And he is expressly called, the image and glory of God, 1 Cor. xi. 7. when the counsel of the Essential Three is uttered concerning the creation, and formation of Adam, it is thus expressed :—“ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness—so God created man in his own image, in the image of

God created he him." Gen. i. 26, 27. Which it is most easy to conceive to be after the pattern, image, and likeness of Christ, God-man, who is the first-born of every creature, the first and chief of all the ways of God, which gave subsistence to them in the eternal, infinite mind of Jehovah, in whom all his counsels and purposes were, and by whom he made the worlds. Christ is nature's fulness as well as the fulness of grace. *He enlightens every man that cometh into the world*, with natural understanding. It was in his image Adam was created, and it hath pleased the Father that all fulness of nature, grace, and glory, should dwell in him, and that in all things he should have the pre-eminence. And his ancient glory and the eternity of his person, is most divinely set forth in the eighth chapter of the Proverbs of Solomon: I confess I do not like what is there written, to be applied and considered to belong to him merely, and only, as he is truly and essentially in his divine distinctive personality, *the only begotten Son of God*. This is the very foundation of all his glory, both personal, and mediatorial; it arises from hence, and is the foundation and basis of it. If he was not God essentially, by personal union with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, in the self-existent essence, living, subsisting, and partaking of all the perfections, glories, and blessings of it, equally and fully with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, he had not been fit for all that glory and honour, majesty, and splendour, which he wears and bears as God-man—*the fellow of the Lord of Hosts*. This truth, therefore, that Christ is God by nature,

that he is as personally considered *the Son of the living God* ; the knowledge and belief of which is essential to all true faith, to every act of it ; is not weakened by endeavouring to unfold and lay open the mystery and glory of Christ's person as God-man ; and by observing that the life he laid down for us, the glory he emptied himself of, was not his essential life and glory, but his life and glory as God-man, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead personally. To give you a hint of the glories of Christ, specified in the fore-mentioned chapter : he was set up from everlasting, the object of Jehovah's ineffable delight, possessed by him as his treasury—was with him when he made the worlds, and set a compass upon the face of the deep ;—was by him as one brought up with him, was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. Which is expressive of the ineffable love, solace, and complacency, which the Father had and took in him as God-man elect. And he tells us what he rejoiced in as it respects us—*rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men*. Thus he spent a past, or, as some style it, a post eternity, in expressing his love and delights, towards his elect of human race. As it respects that life of essential glory and blessedness which the second person, merely as second person, lived and enjoyed in one common, ineffable, and incomprehensible communion with the Father and the Spirit, the Scripture speaks not of it, being beyond our capacity ; yea, beyond what the peers of glory, I mean the elect angels, though they are before the throne, and live con-

tinually in the presence of God, can comprehend. It being all their happiness to gaze, it is their heaven of heavens to see God-man, and live for ever in the vision and enjoyments of him. To close this, I thus conceive the Scriptures to set forth the glories and excellences of our Christ, that, from everlasting, the incomprehensible Three were pleased to set forth, and contrive the means whereby all the glories of the Godhead might shine forth manifestively in a creature, and before the view of elect creatures. That it pleased Jehovah, the Father, to predestinate the second person in the incommunicable essence, to become a creature, or to be predestinated into creature being, and existence, to take into union with himself, that identical humanity which the Father had elected and appointed to this high grace, of being one in personality with the Son of his love: and that these being the primitive thoughts, purposes, counsels, and designs of the Lord God; hence Christ, God-man, is called, *the first-begotten of every creature*; he being before all the rest in God's purpose and decree, and they being made for him, to illustrate his praise, and glory; and the eternity, glory, excellences, and perfections, of Christ's person as God-man, are exhibited to our view in the first chapter of the Colossians, from the 15th to the 19th verse; in which, the personal excellences, native, and inherent, in the person Christ, God-man, with the royalties incommunicable to any mere creature, and infinitely transcending all their privileges, are stated with pre-



cision and infallibility. He is said there to be, "The image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:" which causes me to say, (you must be so kind as to excuse it, but there is now an absolute necessity for it,) that all the types of Christ were but shadows, in all their excellences, of him, the substance; and what is said of the ceremonial law, that it was a shadow of things to come, but the body, or substance, shadowed forth by it, was Christ. (See Col. ii. 17.) So the same is also true of persons, that were types of him; the creation of this world, and the formation of the first man, were on purpose to make Christ known. Which brings me forward, in the execution of my proposal and design, to shew you, that Adam, in his creation, formation, and constitution, as an head, was an image, type, and figure of Christ. The text tell us, "*Adam* was the figure of him who was to come:" to the intent, that the whole may be plain and clear to your spiritual views, conceptions, apprehensions, and capacities, let me again suggest to you, that the creation of this world, and the formation of man, which was the effect of God's own free and sovereign will, was the fruit of divine predestination. The universe was but the stage raised up, on which the Lord thought fit to act some of his deepest designs. His creating Adam, was as a shadow to represent a more glorious Adam, who was to have a universal headship over the whole creation of God, and whose glories were to shine out visibly, in, and throughout every part of the whole creation. The world created, furnished,

and finished, *man* is brought forth. Before we read of this formation, we read of that renowned consultation between the Eternal Three we before noticed, which is recited in Gen. i. 26. which respects Christ, God-man :—he was from eternity, the object, and subject, of all the counsels of the Trinity. Adam, created and made after God's image, which Paul tells us consists in righteousness and true holiness, was Christ's type, who is the *image of the invisible God—the holy one of God. In whom his soul delighteth*, with whom, and in whom he is everlastingly *well pleased*, on account of the glories and transcendent excellences, which are inherent in him, as God the Son, dwelling personally in the human nature assumed by him. The formation of Adam's body, by God's immediate hand, out of the dust of the ground, was as a type, or shadow, of the assumption of the human nature by the Son of God, whose body was formed immediately by the Holy Ghost ; and as Adam's body was formed and produced from the virgin earth ; so Christ's human nature, was produced and formed in the womb of a virgin. The union of soul and body in Adam, was a shadow to express that most deep, profound, and greatest of all mysteries, the hypostatical union of our nature, in the person of Christ. And it is used most justly and excellently, in what is commonly called, the Athanasian Creed : “ As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man ; so God and man is one Christ.” As Adam's body comprised the perfections of all creatures, and was suited to take in all the pleasures and comforts they could afford, and impart ; so the

glory of Christ's human nature, excels all creatures, even the angels themselves. As Adam, placed in paradise, had all the creatures brought before him, and was made to have dominion over them all, and crowned with glory and honour ; so Christ, prefigured by him, hath universal empire and dominion over all worlds, beings, and things, as may be seen in the eighth Psalm, which the Apostle applies to our Jesus, Heb. ii. 9. Where the dominion over all creatures and things is ascribed to him ; and the earth, heavens, sun, moon, and stars, magnify him. For though he was a little while abased below the angels, in his humiliation, yet he is now crowned, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Also we may consider Adam, as a figure and type of Christ, as he was created alone, and placed in paradise, where we may conceive a sabbath passed over him, and was spent by him in the celebration of Jehovah's praise. For some time must be allowed from Adam's formation to his fall, as we expressly read, that *Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowls of the air, and to every beast of the field, but among them all, there was not found an help meet for him.* Now, as he was created on the sixth day, and it may seem towards the close, or evening of that day, so as time must be allowed for the creatures to be presented to him, that he might view them, to pass before him, that he upon the knowledge he had of their nature, species, and qualities, might give them names suitable to their natures ; so it may be, the first Sabbath was spent by him without sin, in divine fellowship with the Eternal Three, which I shall only

make this use of, that like as he, being created alone, may be supposed to dwell alone in Eden, and exercise himself on the first Sabbath, in meditating on all God's works ; so our Lord Jesus exercised before his incarnation, and spent an eternity in venting his loves, in foreviewing the persons of the elect, rejoicing in them, and all he was to be, and to do, and suffer in the fulness of time for them. As Adam in Paradise needed a spouse, God declaring it was not good for him to be alone, and therefore provided a spouse for him, whom he formed out of one of his ribs, brought her to, presented, gave, and united her to him, by marriage : so it was a figure of what had passed in the eternal decrees and settlements of grace. Though the God-man was set up as the *brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*, which words I conceive to be spoken of him as God-man : yet it was not good for him to be alone ; he was to have a partner with him, to share in his communicable grace, titles, honours, riches, and glory. And to this end, and for this purpose, a mystical body was formed for him, which is styled his glory, yea, his crown of glory, and royal diadem. Isaiah lxii. 3. As the wife is said to be the glory of the husband, 1 Cor. xi. 7. so the Church is the glory of Christ. Zanchy says, " In heaven Christ will set up his Church full of beauty and glory, and his language will be, Behold, here she is, that I have made to delight in." And the Church may be said, to be necessary for Christ, as an empty vessel for him to supply with grace and glory. As Adam was first created, and set up to be the head

of the visible world, and all things were made for him ; so Christ was, in the order of God's decrees, first set up in eternal predestination, in all his titles, glories, and royalties, in heaven ; and which, you may easily conceive, by considering, that the person who was set up to bear the title, and who wears the garb and personage of God-man elect, was from everlasting, a person in the essence. And, as God, when he created Adam, created Eve in him, and in blessing Adam, blessed all mankind ; so God chose the elect in Christ, and they had a virtual being and existence in him from everlasting ; hence he is styled, *the everlasting Father*, Isaiah ix 6. So he also blessed Christ, and in blessing him, blessed all the elect in him, and together with him :—as he made the woman out of man, and brought her, and presented her before him, to take his heart and affections with her, so it pleased the Lord, that Christ should not be in heaven alone ; but the Father chose, and presented before and to him, a mystic spouse and bride, fit for him, which he, receiving in the glass of divine decrees, that presentation of her, drew his heart, and fixed, and united his affections to her from everlasting, and which he hath vented and expressed towards her in an infinite ineffable way, and manner. This great mystery is thus expressed by a worthy—“ The Father predestinated a spouse ultimately *unto himself*, immediately unto Jesus Christ, out of a creature, lump, and diversity of things and persons foreviewed, and designed to be made by, and for Jesus Christ, this image of the *invisible God, the first-born*, as is said of every crea-

ture! This spouse was to be a glorious body, a glorious spouse to this man, Christ, chosen in him, and when brought forth in the covenant settlements, (the immediate births of the decree) was given to the *man*, subsisting in the Son of God! and this glorious *husband*, the whole *mediator*, bestowed upon her! and so God himself, in the personal union of the natures, lays the foundation of his grace, within himself to marry her, and to make that *secret marriage* in eternity, the unchangeable security of her open marriage at the latter day, in the face of all the creatures;" according to Isa. liv. 5. "For thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer, the holy one of Israel." To close this head, from what hath been delivered, you may view Adam, as a figure, type, and shadow of Christ, even in his very creation; and this brings me to my third particular, in which I will aim to shew unto you from the scriptures of truth, that Christ as God-man, was ordained, constituted, and appointed to be the head, root, and founder, of a supernatural condition to the elect before the world was, without and beyond the consideration of the fall. It is an acknowledged truth, by all who are sound in the matters of faith, that election is the fountain of salvation, the foundation which secures to eternity—which remains the same immutable act from everlasting to everlasting, and which secures grace, and glory; but in our contemplations of this grace, or rather of some of the inestimably precious blessings and benefits which grow upon this *tree of*

life, we overlook the glorious head of the elect, in whom they were chosen, and from whom they receive all their blessings. Christ is the head of all the elect, and was ordained, constituted, and appointed to be their head, root, and foundation, and that from everlasting. And here is an introduction to what is to follow, let it be considered, that God's highest ends of making and ordaining any creature, was the manifestation of himself, and communication of himself, and he ordained the being and the utmost well-being of his beloved ones, in *Christ their head*, in whom they had a representative being, which was real; this representation of them, being made in him, and by him, he undertaking to stand for them, as their head, to represent them. God's utmost end in manifesting and communicating himself, was effected by the union of the Son of his love, with the man, Christ Jesus; in whom God's glory shines forth to the very uttermost; for hereby the Son of God is united to, and dwelleth with, all the fulness of the essential perfections of Godhead, personally in our nature assumed by him. So that our head, and husband, is God-man: in him as God-man we were chosen, to him as such we were united, and in him we were blessed, and accepted; by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, before the world began. Dr. Goodwin says, "As God, to communicate himself to creatures, was moved to create; so he was resolved to communicate himself to the utmost, or he would never create at all; he would never put his hand to this work else. Now, he could not

have made a communication of himself the highest way, but by a personal union of some person with a creature reasonably, for all communication depends upon a union. The creature must be one with God, ere it communicates of his goodness in a way of blessedness. Now therefore, by this rule still, the nearer union, the nearer communication. And by the same proportion, the highest communication cannot be without the highest union. Now that highest union alone, is personal union of a creature with one who was God; and by this union, the highest communication is effected:—the Son of God, who is God, give bounds of subsistence, and personality to that human nature: so as the human nature, and the Son of God, are not only *one flesh*, as man and wife, which is the nearest union with us; nor *one spirit* only, as with Christ; but one person. And hence this human nature is made God's fellow, as Zechariah calls him, Zech. xiii. 7. The man, God's fellow, is advanced to a fellowship in this society of the Trinity, and therefore to him God communicates himself proportionably, without measure." I add to this, that from this union of our nature with the second person in the Godhead, the foundation is laid for our union to his person, and it is in him as thus viewed and considered, we were chosen. We are expressly told, that God, who cannot lie, promised eternal life before the world began. Tit. i. 2. The promises must have been made and given to Christ on our behalf. For it is also said, that *all the promises of God, in him, are yea, and in him Amen.* 2 Cor. i. 20. Also,



we are informed, that grace was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began. 2 Tim. i. 9. Now, if all the promises God hath made in his word, were made from everlasting, then Christ must be considered as God-man from everlasting, to whom as the head, and representative of the elect, all the promises were made, and in whom as such, they have their truth, foundation, and existence, their *yea, and Amen*. Also, this may serve to convey more light to our minds, if we consider that *man and wife, head and members*, must be like, and of the same nature. Now, Christ as God-man, and the elect bride of human race, are both of one nature, and as such, agreeably suited to each other. And, if he bore the title of the everlasting Father, because of his relation to us as his children, see Isaiah ix. why might he not bear the title of God-man from eternity? Nay, he did bear this name, if we credit the scriptures cited, in which we are informed, that "Grace was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." The word *Christ*, is a name given him by the Holy Ghost, who consecrated him as God-man, and sealed him as the *Messiah, the Sent of God*. As we thus consider the subject, Christ as God-man, being the principal object of God's election, in which the love, grace, and sovereignty of Jehovah, shone forth in its meridian splendour, we conceive of the election of Christ, the head, as the first act and instance of grace; whose election was altogether of grace, and to glory, to such as was, and will be incommunicable to all beside. But, though he was chosen him-

self, to the highest union and communion with the Godhead ; he was chosen also, as an head to an elect seed, who were chosen in him as their head, and had a supercreation, being, and existence, given them in him ; and supercreation, blessings, and benefits, bestowed upon them, in him, before the foundation of the world, and this is to be evidenced and proved unto you from the scriptures of truth. Election, which is God the Father's act, by which we had being in—were united to—and interested in Christ ; and from whence all other blessings, graces, privileges, and benefits proceed, was before the foundation of the world ; in which act the whole fullness of God's love was contained, which cannot be fully comprehended by us ; no, not in heaven to all eternity, which shone forth in blessing us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus—in predestinating us to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ—in whose person he accepts us ;—so all these blessings are spoken of as supercelestial ones, proceeding from grace, without and above the consideration of the fall, as may be seen in the 3d, 4th, 5th, and 6th verses of the first chapter to the Ephesians. God's act of election, which gave us being and interest in Christ, his blessing us in Christ, as his God and Father, and as our God and Father in him, with all spiritual blessings—His predestinating us to the adoption of sons, and his acceptation of our persons, in the person of his beloved, are spoken of in the past tense, as supralapsarian blessings, as flowing from Christ, the head, root, and founder, of a supernatural condition to the elect, before the world was, and beyond the consider-

ation of the fall. Here that noted maxim of Divines is necessary, That what is first in intention, is last in execution. God set up Christ, and his elect bride, in his eternal designs and purposes, in the utmost glory ; but in the accomplishing his decrees, he permits his bride, the Lamb's wife, to be brought forth in creation, in her nature-head, pure, righteous, and holy ; and she is permitted to lose all this which was native and inherent in her by creation, through the fault and fall of the first Adam. By whose loss of the moral image of God, the whole elect human race became sinful, guilty, filthy, and dead in sin. To rescue them from their enemies, to deliver them out of the hands of law, and justice, the God-man, their head, and husband, laid aside the form of God, and appeared in the form and likeness of sinful flesh, emptied himself of the glory, which he had before the world was, and to bring his Church out of that eclipse under which it was by reason of sin ; he himself underwent an eclipse of his person, that the rays of everlasting love might shine the brighter on it. Had not Christ been their head and root, he had not undertaken for them ; but in his covenant-engagements on their behalf, with his divine Father, upon the fore-views of their sin, he considered them as his beloved, his members, spouse, and children, and his own ; and out of his own love, arising from the union and relation which subsisted between him and them, " forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that

is, the devil." I conclude this head with the words of Dr. Goodwin—"When God chose Christ, and the elect, through the vast omniscience of his understanding, he had all his *plan* before him. Now, he having Christ, and the work of redemption, and us, and all this before him; the question is, What he had most in his eye, and what his will chiefly and primarily pitched upon? I say, adds he, it was Christ, and the glory of his person. God's chief end was not to bring Christ into the world for us, but *us*, for Christ; he is worth all creatures. And God contrived all things which do fall out, and even redemption itself, for the setting forth of Christ's glory, more than our salvation." If the following scriptures, are considered, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: Ephes. i. 3, 4, 5, 6. You will see, as the Holy Spirit is pleased to shine on your minds, that the elect were in Christ, as their head, and root, from everlasting, and that he being their head, is the founder of their supernatural state and condition; it is because they have union and relation to his person, and he to theirs, that he became their

Saviour, and will, as the Lord from heaven, raise them up one day to partake of that glorious state, and live with him in the immediate presence of his Father, for ever and ever. And thus, I am brought lastly, to conclude, with shewing how our *all* is completely and eternally secured in the person of our Lord Jesus. As God had two vast designs upon the elect, and boundless blessings to bestow and communicate to them ; so Christ hath a double relation to them, first, that of an Head ; secondly, that of a Redeemer. When God permitted the fall of all mankind in Adam, the elect fell in him, and lost all those blessings of holiness, purity, and righteousness, which he was appointed as their head of nature, to convey unto them, and received from him an impure, sinful nature ; by which means, they are in their natural state, children of wrath, their sins are as justly deserving of divine wrath, as the sins of the non-elect. They are also, without all hope and help in themselves ; in this state, and to the end they might be delivered out of it, they stood in need of redemption, which was undertaken and engaged for before the foundation of the world. The elect lost their all that was given unto them, and bestowed upon them, in their nature-head. But they lost not their interest in the grace of election, in the person of Christ, in the supernatural spiritual blessings which had been bestowed upon them in Christ, their eternal and everlasting head, and this secured them from everlasting ruin and misery. The love of God to his elect in Christ, was not weakened, nor the

union-knot between Christ and his Church loosed, by all which befel them, and came upon them, by the fall. But this made way for the double relation of Christ towards them to be manifested, which is thus distinguished by Paul, who says, "Christ is the head of the Church, and he is the Saviour of the body." Ephes. v. 23. Christ, being the head of the Church—the life, light, grace, holiness, purity, righteousness, glory, and blessings, in Christ, could not undergo any hazard or damage, by the fall. The body being defiled with sin, the glorious head and husband, who had loved his spouse as himself, having viewed her as the object of his Father's everlasting complacency and delight, descended from heaven, by his mysterious *incarnation*, to fulfil his covenant-stipulations on her behalf, and acts the part of Redeemer, and Saviour. Had she lost her natural original glory and excellence by sin? Christ lays aside his own glory, the glory which he had with the Father, before the world was, and by the holiness of his nature, the obedience of his life, and the offering up himself as an offering for her sin, he made an end of sin, finished transgression, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. He humbled and emptied himself for a season, to lift up and deliver his Church out of her lost and low estate, and obtained for her eternal redemption. In all he did, acted, and suffered; in the whole of his life, and death, he represented his elect, and their persons—obeyed for them—bore their sins, as in union with their persons, and sus-

tained the whole curse due to their crimes. He died, was buried, rose from the dead, and entered heaven, as their Head, and High Priest; and he presents them in his own person before the throne, and remembers them with everlasting kindness—and, as the head of his people he is their complete holiness, righteousness, and salvation, because the holiness of his human nature, the obedience of his life, the sorrows and sufferings he endured, when he made his soul an offering for sin, are imputed by Jehovah, the Father, to all his elect. Hence the Apostle saith—“Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” 1 Cor. i. 30. Now, here lies the security of the Lord’s people to eternity, their persons, their blessings, their salvation, their glory, are all in Christ, treasured up in him, and will remain eternally in him. And as by virtue of our being in Adam, we sinned in him, and by reason of our union with him, we received, and are the partakers of an unholy nature: so by virtue of union, the union of our persons to the Lord Jesus Christ, we have life, grace, holiness, and salvation in him; and he doth in his own good time and way, send down his Holy Spirit into the hearts of his people, when they are dead in trespasses and sins, and he imparts spiritual life to their souls, and they are made partakers of the divine nature in regeneration, which is the fruit and effect of their being in Christ, and a manifestation of it. And though we are quickened by the Holy Ghost up into acts of spiritual life, yet

that life with which he quickened us, is a life communicated to us from the fulness of Jesus, who is the head, and fountain, from whence all our supernatural life cometh. Out of whose fulness we all receive, and grace for grace. Our whole salvation, sanctification, growth in grace, and glorification, are the fruits and effects of our union with Christ, and his in-being, and in-dwelling in us. In him, our heavenly Father, beholds us without all spot and stain of sin, holy, and unblamable, before him. And our life of grace and glory is all out of ourselves, in the person of Christ, and it will remain in him to eternity; and he will one day admit us to behold his glory, to see him as he is, and to enjoy him for ever. Believers! we should look on our *new birth*, and every act of it, as the fruit of union to Christ, and the effect of it; and as the whole of Christ belongs to us, and we are in him that is true, and wear his righteousness, and are cleansed from all our sins in his blood, we should rejoice as being more completely holy, blessed, and secure in him for time and eternity, than though we had never fallen. Indeed we ought to make this use of the *fall*, to renounce all being, but what we have in Christ, and to know that all true being and blessedness, consists in being one in him, and with him. We need fear nothing, for Christ hath spoken it, "*Because I live ye shall live also.*" And as our life of faith consists in knowing, living on, and in communion with Christ, viewing him in his mediatorial person, work, and office; so our life of glory will consist in the vision



of him, in seeing him as he is, in uninterrupted fellowship with him as our head, in heaven, where we shall be perfectly like him, and shine in our measure as he doth, both in body and soul. I add no more. *Amen.*

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## SERMON IV.

THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE, IN HER NUPTIAL  
ATTIRE.

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PSALM XLV. 13, 14.

*The King's daughter is all-glorious within; her  
clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought  
unto the King in raiment of needle-work.*

**T**HE reading of these words reminds me of what the angel in the Revelation said to John, Come hither, I will shew thee "the bride, the Lamb's wife;" for you have in the words of our text, the Church, and spouse of Christ in her nuptial attire, having on her coronation robes, and shining forth in her majesty, glory, and splendour. This Psalm, poem, or hymn, from whence I have selected the words before us, was indited by the Holy Spirit, and wrote by the royal Psalmist; and is dedicated

by him to Christ Jesus. It is a nuptial song: a part of its title is, "A Song of Loves," setting forth the mutual love of Christ and his Church; and sung by the beloved virgins, the friends and lovers of the bridegroom, and the companions of the bride, to express their joy on the open solemnization of the marriage between Christ and his Church. You have here two of the greatest sights that ever will be seen on earth, or in heaven. The heavenly bridegroom, Christ Jesus, in his glory; and his queen, his mystic body and spouse, in her utmost glory and excellency.

The writer begins with deep devotion, full of profound meditation to speak out and declare, what his eager thoughts had been engaged upon, and how divinely his heart had been affected. He enters upon the subject, addressing Christ the Lord, saying, "Thou art fairer than the children of men." His beauties, excellences, graces, and majesty, are transcendently ravishing! They fill the souls of his people, their understandings, wills, and affections, with incomparable delight and joy. "Grace is poured into thy lips," they being like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, perfuming, refreshing, and strengthening the hearts of his beloved and chosen ones. All which proceed from the everlasting grace of Jehovah, the Father; who hath blessed Christ, as God-man, Mediator, for ever; and presented him with all the blessings of goodness, to the end that, he should speak good words and comfortable to his people. Having in view, the excellences of Jesus, and his kingdom of grace; the Prophet expresseth

his joy, saying, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty; with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things." It is expressive of his spiritual exultation, at all the great and glorious displays of Christ's grace and power manifested in the word. "Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee." Some as true subjects; others as ruled over and subdued by Christ, the conqueror, as his enemies. He then magnifies the King-mediator, the eternity of his kingdom, the equity, and stability of it. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." "The sceptre of thy kingdom, is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Here is the original of the name, Christ, which signifies anointed; and the oil with which he was anointed, is here expressed, "the oil of gladness." The anointer was God the Father; the anointed was God the Son, considered as the head and mediator of his Church, and people; and the sacred oil with which he was anointed, was the unmeasurable gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, which Christ received, and which yields a rich, and sends forth an odorous perfume. Hence it follows, "all thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad." Christ, who received this name from the Holy Spirit, who framed and formed his human nature, preserving

it from the infection of original corruption, sanctifying and filling it with all habitual grace, who shed his grace like anointing oil, making and declaring him to be both Lord and Christ ;” the garment of his humanity, and the garments of salvation, and robe of righteousness, wrought out by him, render him a sweet perfume, and make his name to be unto his people, as precious “ ointment poured forth.”—The next words are expressive how some of the honourable of the earth, should be joined to Christ, and his Church: “ Kings’ daughters were among thy honourable women : upon thy right hand did stand the queen, in gold of Ophir.” Upon which, as I conceive, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, addresses the queen, placed at the right hand of the king, her lord and husband, saying, “ Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear ; forget also thine own people, and thy Father’s house ; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty ; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.” Then follows an account of some accession to the Church of Christ, by the conversion of some Tyrians, which had in part its accomplishment in the times of Christ, and his Apostles. “ And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift, even the rich among the people, shall intreat thy favour.” This is the case when quickened and truly gracious souls seek for, and apply to be admitted into Church-fellowship, and to Church ordinances. Then follow the words of my text—“ The King’s daughter is all-glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold.

She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work."—The words contain the following particulars:—

Here is the title given to the Church, "The King's Daughter"—what is said of her, "she is all-glorious within"—Her nuptial dress is said to be, "of wrought gold"—and how she shall be introduced into the King's presence is declared; "She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work."

Conceiving in myself some extraordinary grace discovered in the title given to the Church, who is here called "the King's daughter," I intend, therefore, to cast the substance of my discourse into the following method and order.—By making,

First, such remarks and observations from the title the Church here bears, as may lay the whole foundation of the subject matter, which I mean at this time to pursue and deliver unto you. After which, I will,

Secondly, declare how, and in what way and manner the Church, the King's daughter, is "all-glorious within."—Then,

Thirdly, I will take notice of her marriage-robe, and garment of state, which is thus expressed, "Her clothing is of wrought gold."—And,

Lastly, in what manner she shall be presented before the King, "She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work."—These are the particulars; may the Lord assist in opening, pursuing, and explaining them.—I am,

First, to make such remarks and observations from the title the Church here bears, as may lay the foundation of our present subject. She is styled, "the King's daughter." This leads me to observe, that the Church is the spouse and bride of Christ, chosen for him, presented to him, and bestowed on him, by his eternal Father; who being Christ's Father, is by the marriage-union between Christ and his bride, her Father also. Sin having drawn a veil over the greatest of all the mysteries of grace, the union of the elect, to the person of Christ, it will make my present attempt very difficult. It being much more easy, to apprehend our misery, and our redemption from it, by the incarnation, obedience, and sacrifice of the Son of God; than to conceive of the original glory, excellency, purity, and dignity, of the Church of Christ, as the object of God's thoughts, purposes, counsel, and will. Let us observe the following things, as parts and links of the golden chain of God's deep designs of grace, as they may lead us up to the grand primordial cause of all.

Salvation springs from an ancient counsel and covenant, which were founded upon the eternal transactions of God, and the *Lamb*; whose undertakings and engagements were in consequence of his union to, and with the elect; which union, from which flow all grace and glory—communications, arises from God's primitive designs, towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect. I would give you a draught of this mysterious grace, in the following manner:

The ever blessed, glorious, and incomprehensible Three, to whom nothing can be added or diminished, the spring and fountain of whose essential blessedness arises from the immense perfections of the infinite nature, in which they exist—in the mutual love they have in each other, and their mutual solace and converse together—were pleased to delight in creature-fellowship, and society. The eternal Father, predestinated his co-essential Son, into creature, being, and existence; and, from everlasting he wore the form, and bore the personage of God-man. He is said to be, “*the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature,*” Col. i. 15. which is not spoken of him simply, as personally and essentially considered, as “*the only-begotten Son of God,*” but as God-man; who, as such, is the *image of God*, in whom, as ordained to be personally united to the nature of man, the glory of God broke forth and shone before all time—in whom, as God-man, “*dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead personally;*” and in whom as Mediator, and in his works of mediation, there is an image of all the attributes of God; they being all displayed in his work and offices. God fixed upon the person of Christ, God-man, as the one great and everlasting object of his love, delight, and complacency. He was, as God-man, the beginning of all the ways of God, respecting creature-acts. All things were to be created by him, *and for him*; and he was to be the head, foundation, and corner-stone, of the whole creation. God was pleased to decree an elect number of Adam's race, to be united to Christ, to

be ordained for his glory. As he was *the fellow of the Lord of Hosts*; they were to be *his fellows*, who were to receive their all from him, and to be everlastingly glorified in, and with him.

In these eternal thoughts and primitive views, the elect were conceived and viewed in the divine mind, in their state of pure creatureship; above and beyond the consideration of the fall; and were set in the view of Christ, God-man, according to the idea and conception God the Father had of them in his eternal thoughts, in which they were the objects of his ineffable love and complacency. From this representation of them, the heart of Christ was taken with them, and drawn after them; and he asked for them, and they were given to him. "*Thine they were, and thou gavest them me,*" says our Lord to his Father, in his intercessory prayer. To clear and render these truths easy and familiar, I would observe to you, that man is said, 1 Cor. xi. 7. to be "*the image and glory of God*"; and the woman is said to be, *the glory of the man.*" Adam, in his creation, and formation, was a shadow, and type of Christ. Before his creation, you read of a council held between the Eternal Three, concerning him. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Gen. i. 26. Adam's body, made out of the virgin earth, was formed after the image and likeness conceived in the divine mind, of Christ's human nature. The union between the soul and body of Adam, was as a shadow to represent the incomprehensible union, between the essential Son of God, and our nature, which he assumed into per-



sonal union with himself. Adam's lordship, served to express Christ's universal headship, over all things to his Church. And the formation of Eve, her marriage and union with Adam, was, as a type, or shadow, to represent the marriage-union, between Christ, and his Church. "The Lord God said, it is not good that man should be alone: I will make an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." Which I shall make use of and accommodate thus. As there was a council between the Trinity before, and concerning the creation of man; so Christ, as God-man, was the object of Jehovah's love; all his vast thoughts, councils, purposes, and decrees, were in him, concerning him, and his manifestative glory, from eternity. As God said, "It is not good that man should be alone: I will make him an help meet for him;" so as it respects the God-man, set up in heaven, and glorified before the world was, he thought it not meet for him to be alone; but chose and ordained a bride for him. As God created the woman, out of the rib and flesh which did cleave unto it, which he had taken out of Adam's side; so he chose the Church in Christ—she was in him before the foundation of the world, and he being predestinated to become incarnate, and his

human nature having a covenant-subsistence, the Church, as thus considered in him, may be said, as one expresses it, to receive her human nature from him. Hence, that strange expression of the Apostle, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." The woman formed and brought to the man by the Lord, to effect and bring about a marriage-union, gives us a view into this high mystery of grace, how God the Father presented the elect to Christ; who, as he viewed them, loved and delighted in them, as the object of his Father's ineffable love, and delight, betrothed them unto himself, taking the Church as thus presented by God unto him, in a deed of marriage-settlement, and covenant-contract, as the gift of the Father, and before the Holy Ghost. As Adam owned the relation between the woman and himself, saying, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; so Christ received the elect at the Father's hands, and became their everlasting *husband*, and she from thence, became his everlasting spouse. Out of Adam's rib, the Lord God made, or builded the woman, for she is a more curious frame than the man. He built her, and shewed a great deal of art in making her. Now, in the Scripture, Jesus Christ is called the foundation. And what is his Church? It is his building: built up for him, and upon him, with a great deal of art, by an infinitely wise architect. "Ye are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. In whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple

in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit." And to use the words of an incomparable Divine, "when the Lord had taken the woman out of man, what doth God do? He closeth up the flesh again. Here is no hurt done. The man is as sound, lived as long, yea, would have lived to eternity, if he had not sinned, for all his loss. And what hath Christ lost by his death for his spouse? Nothing. He endured pain upon the cross; had his side pierced; his soul wounded, to have his Church taken out of the hands of law, and justice; but all is closed up again, and the man, Christ Jesus, is in heaven, for ever; and his Church shall be for ever with him." As the man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man; so Christ, as God-man, was not ordained and set up in God's eternal delights and views for the Church, but the Church was ordained for him; and yet, as the woman is the glory of the man; so the Church is the glory of Christ. Considered as his mystical body, she is called, the "fulness of Christ," so that Christ would be incomplete without her. All his delights are in her; and he will be glorified in her and by her to all eternity; as he will openly manifest himself to her, and put his own glory upon her. I have endeavoured, according to my slender ability, to give you some brief hints, concerning the eternal union, and marriage relationship between Christ and his Church from everlasting; and would now proceed to observe to you, that, as in God's infinite prescience and understanding, he foreknew the fall, having pre-determined to

permit it ; so upon the foresight of it, he engaged in an everlasting covenant with Christ, the head of the elect, to raise them up from under the ruins of the fall, by his open incarnation and finished salvation. By which the everlasting love of God would be discovered in a way which would serve to be the wonder of time, and the admiration of Saints in heaven to all eternity. The Church is brought into this world by creation, pure, holy, and righteous. From this creature-purity, holiness, and righteousness, she fell by Adam's first act of transgression ; and became in her own nature, and person, simply so considered, impure, unholy, and unrighteous. To redeem her out of this state of sin and misery, and to raise her up to the enjoyment of her ancient state and glory, to which she was decreed, and predestinated, her Lord and Saviour, openly appeared by his actual assumption of the nature of his people, and dwelling personally therein. It may be suitable to observe here, the wonderful condescension of Christ ; and the conformity between him and his elect. Did they fall in Adam, and was a veil drawn over them ; so that they cannot, in their fallen state, be known by themselves, or others, to be the Lord's ? Christ, God-man, who had a glory with the Father before the world was, who lived a life of blessedness, inconceivable by us, laid aside his glory, took upon him the form of a servant ; and he who was worshipped by all the host of heaven, " because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, with all the sinless frailties of it, that he might through death, conquer

him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Christ's love herein cannot be fully conceived by us, no, not in heaven. It is as Dr. Owen expresses it, "The fountain, and spring of all the glory that is in heaven, or shall be there to all eternity." Thus Christ, God-man, the Sun of everlasting righteousness, if I may so express it, came under a cloud—suspended the shinings forth of the essential glory due to his person—and emptied himself by laying it aside for a season, to perform and complete the work of redemption by which he was to recover his spouse, and cleanse and wash away her stain and deformity. In this lay the depth of Christ's humiliation! "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. I conceive, the Apostle is here speaking of Christ, as God-man, by which, I mean the Son of God, personally dwelling in the human nature, assumed by him into actual subsistence with himself, in which human nature dwelt, and will for ever dwell, *all the fulness of the Godhead*; the breakings forth of which were withheld, that the work of redemption might be accomplished. It darted forth indeed in its brightness, when Christ was transfigured on the Holy Mount; at which time, his face shone like the sun, and his raiment, which covered his sacred humanity, became *white as the light*; and it breaks forth now he is at

the right hand of God, in its utmost splendour and majesty. But, though all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth personally in Christ, by the hypostatic union of our nature, into one person with the Son of God ; yet, as he took upon him the form of a servant, and appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh ; so he underwent an eclipse in his personal, essential, and incommunicable royalties, glory, and majesty, all his days. And this is that humiliation of Christ, the Scriptures lay so great an emphasis upon. I will only add this to it. You may conceive my meaning, by considering the life Christ lived before he was incarnate. I confess, I cannot describe to you that life of glory, and infinite independent blessedness, which God-man elect, lived and enjoyed before all worlds. But the Holy Ghost can let in some ideas of it into your souls, by leading you to consider, that he was in the bosom of the Father—admitted into fellowship and society with the Incomprehensible Three—and viewed the whole design of God, towards, and upon all his works, with infinite delight, and complacency. This glory, which, as God-man, he had with the Father before the world was, he laid down ; and “ he who was rich, for your sakes became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich.”

Incomprehensible grace! Love immense! Such as will fill Saints in heaven with astonishment, throughout the ages of eternity! I pass on,

Secondly, to declare how, and in what way and manner the Church, the King’s “ daughter, is *all-glorious within*.” The Church, by which I mean, the

whole congregation of God's elect, whose number is complete, and can neither be increased nor diminished, is glorious in Christ, as chosen in him, that she should "*be holy* and without blame before him in love." She is glorious in Christ, her head, and as one in and with him. She is all-glorious as presented in him, and by him in his own person, as her divine representative. And she is all-glorious as cleansed from all her stains, sin, and guilt, in the most precious blood of Christ—as clothed with him as the Lord her righteousness—and as God the Father beholds her in Christ, the beloved—in whom he hath accepted her, and in whom he will ever view her with infinite delight and joy. She is all-glorious within, says my text, which must lead me to consider how she is inwardly glorious. Here I must remind you, how in election-grace, and purposes, God afore prepared his Church for eternal glory, as in his infinite mind he formed Christ, and his Church, to be the exact resemblance of each other. He was, as the Head, to have the pre-eminence in all things; and she was to be conformed to him, to be the epistle of Christ, his poem, curiously wrought up and fashioned, by the internal, powerful, regenerating, sanctifying, influences of the Holy Ghost, and to bear the image, likeness, and resemblance of Christ, her Lord and husband. By being all-glorious within, I conceive, the Holy Ghost, here directs us to consider, that inwrought clothing of inherent graces, those inward seeds of grace, and principles of holiness, which he creates, and implants in the souls of the elect, in regeneration. At which time, he enters

as the Spirit of life within us, quickens the soul, and implants a principle of spiritual life in it, makes it a partaker of the divine nature, works in the soul the habit of all grace, and remains, dwells, and abides in it, as the fountain, spring, cause, and root, of all spiritual life, grace, and holiness. Sirs! the soul is the subject and seat of the whole of God's work of grace within us, and the work of regeneration, and personal sanctification, is as great as the work of redemption. The one was wrought out by Christ, personally dwelling in our nature; the other is effected by the descent of the Holy Ghost, who comes upon us by virtue of election-grace; and as the Holy Comforter, is to us the Lord and giver of all spiritual life; so he dwells in and inhabits us, and by his in-dwelling in our souls, we are sanctified and sealed unto the day of redemption. Believers, are said to be the temples of the living God; yea, the body is said to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is asserted on the account of the actual in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost in us. And his work upon the soul, is perfect and complete. There is no want nor deficiency in it. The soul born of God, can never be more completely regenerate. He has all things pertaining to life, and godliness, every principle of grace, and holiness, being con-creted in the soul, in and at its new and spiritual birth. When Divines say, the work of sanctification is but a begun work, that it is not yet complete and finished, they do not mean any thing contrary to what I have declared. Their meaning is, that the drawing forth these inward graces, into real act, and



exercise, in the fruits and manifestations of love to Christ, his truths, ordinances, cause, and people, will increase more and more, as believers are under the influential presence, and grace, and operations, of the Holy Spirit. As he enlightens their minds to comprehend, and enlarges their hearts to enjoy, more of the love of the Father, by faith in Christ's salvation; so inherent grace is hereby strengthened, the soul more and more renewed after the image of Christ, and brought to a growing conformity to him; all which is the fruit of internal sanctification, the open buds, and blossoms, the effects, and products of it. The true believer has every grace in his new nature, which was in Christ. "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." The weakest habitual grace, is an inchoative conformity to Christ; and as real as the strongest, or that which is perfected in heaven; and hath, in its own nature, all the parts and properties of that grace which is in Christ. He is the great exemplar, and the Holy Spirit, works from Christ, and forms us by his renewing grace, to conformity with him. As, therefore, we consider the Church of Christ, as inhabited by the Holy Ghost, sanctified, and consecrated, by his in-dwelling grace, and presence, she is "all-glorious within." Indeed, all the glory of the Saints in heaven, will arise from the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, who will fill every faculty of their souls with the enjoyment of God, and with the glory of God. To express my meaning, as I cannot do it better, take the following instance: Take iron and put it into the fire; the iron being heated, and the pores thereof

filled with fire, it will look like and shine as bright as fire. So the soul filled with the Holy Ghost, he breaking forth in the utmost display of grace and glory, as he will in heaven, filling the faculties of the soul, the understanding, will and affections, with all the fulness of God; the soul will be inherently *all-glorious*, as thus filled; from which, intrinsic; extrinsic glory, will break forth, and display itself. In a word, as Christ apprehends his people, and works in them by his word and Spirit, all the good pleasure of his will; and the work of faith with power; so the Church is "all-glorious within." Thus I have endeavoured to shew and declare, how the Church, the King's daughter, is "all-glorious within." I could not, according to my own views, consistent with truth, and conscience, explain it otherwise, by carrying it over and applying it to the righteousness of Christ; this being an inward garment, as sanctification is. Hence the Apostle says, "*If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked.*" He is speaking of inherent grace, and holiness, the clothing of the soul, by which it is made meet for heaven, to be clothed upon with immortality, and eternal glory. See 2 Cor. v. 2, 3, 4, 5. I acknowledge it to be an inexpressible mystery of grace, the in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost, in the souls and bodies of the regenerate and called Saints of God, but the Scriptures declare it. He is styled the *Spirit of Christ*, and the *Spirit of God*, and of *glory*; and it is expressly declared that, as such, he dwells in the Saints, and rests upon them. Some

small views of this inestimable grace, are let in upon the mind at times, when we are favoured with communion with Jesus Christ, and with the Father in him; in which converse, and divine intercourse, the Holy Spirit, is the great agent; it is he who fills our souls with a real enjoyment of Christ, and the Father's love; and by revealing the Father, in his love, and Christ, in his person, work and grace to us, we feel influentially, as real fellowship, as was ever enjoyed in heaven. The communion is of the same nature, as true and as influential; the difference lies not in this, but in the continuance of it. Hence I have said, and I speak not at random on this subject, that in and from the hearts of *some saints* on earth, the Holy Ghost draws forth, at times, grace, into as high acts, and degrees, as he probably ever will in glory. It is here, indeed, but transient, there it will be perpetually the case. Personal communion with God, and the Lamb, through the Spirit, are real foretastes of glory; yea, it is glory, eternal glory, already begun in them, and enjoyed by them, and breaking forth in and upon them.—I proceed,

Thirdly, to take notice of and view the Church and spouse of Christ, in her marriage-robe, and garment of state, which is thus expressed: “Her clothing is of wrought gold.” The bridal suit, the marriage-robe, and garment of state, in which Christ's Church is all-glorious, is the righteousness of her great and glorious Lord, which, for the excellency, worth, splendour, and durableness of it, is compared to

*gold of Ophir*, in the 9th verse of this Psalm, and here before us, to *wrought gold*. In which robe, the elect of God, shine before him with lustre, glory, and majesty, inconceivable by us. The Eternal Three beheld the Church in this robe, as clothed in and wearing it as the robe of righteousness, and garment of salvation, from before all worlds; and Christ, having by his personal obedience to the law, as the Mediator, and surety of his people, brought in everlasting righteousness, it is imputed by God, the Father, to each and all of them; in it, and upon the footing of it, they were accounted righteous before him, and in his decrees and purposes, were justified. And when the Holy Spirit hath enlightened their minds, and given them spiritual views of this righteousness, he pronounces in their consciences the sentence of justification; by which they know their interest, and security in Christ's righteousness, and how that by him, *all that believe are justified from all things*. The excellency of this robe exceeds the conception of Saints, either in earth, or heaven. It is more bright, luminous, and refulgent, than heaven, and of more worth and value, than eternal glory. It exceeds the righteousness of those bright Seraphs that never fell, who shine before the Lord, in the purity and dignity of their creation-dress. But those morning stars all fade and lose their lustre, when compared with the Lamb's chosen and beloved spouse; who, in his righteousness, outshines in glory, the angels of God's presence. The Church of Christ is as truly, perfectly, and immutably righteous before the Lord, as the righteousness of Christ can make

her. She is clothed with the very righteousness of Christ, the God-man, Mediator; though not with his righteousness, as Mediator, but with his righteousness, as the surety of the elect. The obedience which Christ, as God-man, the representative and surety of his beloved ones, wrought out in their law-place, room and stead, is that righteousness which is imputed to them, in which they are justified, pronounced perfectly righteous, and will for ever glory. Jeremiah in chapter xxxiii. speaking of the Church, says, "This is the name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." And this is also the name of her illustrious husband. For in chapter xxiii. speaking of the incarnation, work, and salvation of Christ, the same Prophet says, "This is the name whereby He shall be called, the *Lord our righteousness*." The righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, though but a transient act; yet, it being the act of him who was God, and man, personally united, hath an infinite worth in it; which is, and doth arise, from the personal worth of Christ, as God-man. You may view it thus: It is the understanding, will, and affections, the whole and every faculty of Christ's human nature, body and soul, united personally to the Son of God, by which he became God-man, exercised in its utmost perfection in doing, obeying, and submitting, to the whole will of God. This obedience, with all its eternal value, and efficacy, is *the white linen, the righteousness of Saints*, in which God beholds them without spot, unblamable and irreprovable before him. And, as he views his Church thus, she must be perfect and

complete in Christ. Viewing in the light of the Holy Spirit, and conceiving by faith in the word, the glories and perfections of the God-man, and his obedience ; from the transcendent heights of this Sun of everlasting righteousness—a believer may look upon the righteousness of Adam in his state of purity, and view the righteousness of all the holy angels in glory (and trample upon all) as having no glory, in comparison with the excelling glory of Christ's righteousness ! Theirs, at best, is but a creature-righteousness ; but believers in Christ are arrayed in the righteousness of God, of the God-man, where the divine perfections shine gloriously ; and they are made the righteousness of God in him. Can the Church shine more gloriously, than she shines in this robe ? She will shine before the throne in this nuptial robe for ever ; and Christ, the Sun of glory, will shine immediately upon her ; and the Holy Ghost, who will dwell in the souls and bodies of the glorified, will fill them in every part, faculty, and sense, with glory to the full.—But I pass on to consider,

Lastly, in what manner the Church, the King's daughter, shall be presented before the King, “ She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework.” The Church, the bride and spouse of Christ, espoused by him, and betrothed unto him from everlasting, redeemed by him in the fulness of time, and purchased with the price of his own blood, openly espoused unto him in the day of his power, when he rejoices over them in their conversion, which

is the day of gladness of heart to him—when the whole number of the elect, are openly gathered by the effectual grace of the Holy Ghost, to Christ the true Shiloh, their living head—the open solemnization of the nuptials between Christ the bridegroom, and the Church the bride, will then take place; at which time, she shall be brought into the King's presence, in raiment of needle-work. The Holy Spirit here is speaking of future things. It is a figurative expression, as the former was, expressive of the excellency of Christ's righteousness, the clothing of wrought gold, and raiment of needle-work. The Church was brought to Christ, and presented to him by God the Father, in all her glorious dignity, and excellency, in that state and majesty, in which she will shine in heaven to all eternity, before all worlds. She will be brought at the resurrection-morn before Christ, adorned as a bride for her glorious husband. At which time, all her spots and stains, will be everlastingly obliterated; she will then shine immutably holy—consummately righteous, and inestimably pure. She will be clothed with immortality, and glory, and be perfectly conformed in soul and body to Christ Jesus, who at his appearing will make her like himself, for she shall then see him as he is.—Who will bring the spouse into the King's presence? It may be, the elect angels may have that honour conferred on them.—I view it thus:

At the close of time, when it is to be swallowed up in eternity, the whole mystery of God's will being

accomplished, concerning the Church in her present visible state, the Lord Christ himself, will descend with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God ; accompanied with a glorious retinue, all his holy angels with all the departed souls of the elect ; these shall come down with him from God out of heaven, in order to be re-united to their respective bodies, which will then be raised by the voice of Christ. In a moment, the trumpet being sounded, the bodies of all the elect under the arrest of death will be raised, immortal, powerful, glorious, and incorruptible, and their souls re-united to them. Immediately upon this, the elect, found alive upon earth, will be changed in the twinkling of an eye. Their souls will be instantaneously perfected in grace, and their bodies immortalized. And thus the whole Church being gathered together and rendered complete, they will be caught up by the ministry of angels, to meet the Lord, who will now be in the open region of the air, where they will mutually rejoice and congratulate each other. While thus engaged, Christ will set fire to the universe, when it, and all in it, and the wicked upon it, shall be burnt up. And the conflagration being ended, Christ will make new heavens, and a new earth. “ This terraqueous globe, and its circumambient atmosphere, will be so purified by the preceding general conflagration ; as to be totally changed in their qualities, and entirely divested of every thing noxious, or which can cause disgust or pain.” In the new earth and upon it, Christ will descend and dwell, and all his Saints with him, as a



preludium to the state of ultimate glory. And here Christ's prayer for the whole Church will be fully answered: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." For now they will be presented as one body in Christ, stand perfect in him, as he their head stands and subsists in God, and have a comprehensive glory-unity. The mystery of election, in union and perfect conformity to Christ, will then shine forth, and be perceived by the Saints; and the Church shall reign with Christ in his beams of light, for ever, and ever, and ever.

Having thus far pursued the subject, so as to present you with a view of Christ and his bride, all-glorious in each other, I close with saying, the glory of Christ and the Church on the nuptial day, is far, infinitely far beyond all conceptions. The Lord will be her everlasting light, and her God her glory. And after a thousand years solace in the new world, the Church will be taken by him to the state of ultimate glory, where God, Father, Son, and Spirit, in Christ, God-man, will be ALL in ALL.

The Lord forgive what has been amiss, and bless what has been right; and cause us to cry out, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. *Amen.*

## SERMON V.

CHRIST MYSTICAL BEARS THE SAME TITLE  
WITH CHRIST PERSONAL.

I CORINTHIANS XII. 12.

*For as the body is one, and hath many members,  
and all the members of that one body being many  
are one body, so also is Christ.*

THE Church of Christ at Corinth, being an Apostolical one, which had an infallible plan laid down, and also a clear view and knowledge of all the offices which Christ, their Lord and head, had instituted in it ; as also of the officers who were qualified and called to fill up these offices ; so it was richly filled up, and gifted with Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers, and Deacons ; on whom a rich variety of gifts were bestowed, suitable for them, as they were not all to fill up one, but each of them had their respective offices assigned them by Christ, as the supreme king and master, over his house the Church.

On these officers, these following Apostolical gifts were conferred. The word of wisdom and knowledge :—of faith :—gifts of healing :—working

of miracles:—prophecy:—discerning of spirits:—diversities of tongues:—interpretation of tongues.

The Apostle is in this chapter giving an account of those spiritual gifts, and gives instruction to the gifted brethren, how they should exercise their gifts and graces in such a manner as might redound to the real use, profit, and benefit, of the whole christian community. As some of the members of this Church were Gentiles, and as others of them were Jews; so he puts the former of them in mind, and calls to their remembrance that blind, sinful, heathenish state they had been in, with their abominable customs and practices, which had then been exercised by them. He says to them, “now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant,” neither of the author, nature, use, and excellency of them. The sacred writer further thus addresses them: “Ye know that ye were Gentiles.” They had not been merely and only *sinner*s by nature, but *sinner*s of the Gentiles; worshippers of dumb idols, so it follows, “carried away unto these dumb idols, to which they were led by their Priests under a diabolical influence, which it may be was accompanied with various pretended miracles, “even as ye were led.” Therefore he would have them from their own real knowledge and experience, which they had of the Holy Spirit’s renewing, converting, sanctifying grace, give Him his just tribute of praise, for turning them from darkness unto light, from bondage to liberty; from worshipping idols, to serve the living and true God in his divine personalities, as co-existing in the unity of one incompre-

hensible and undivided essence. He adds, “wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed : and that no man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, or Jehovah, but by the Holy Ghost.” He then proceeds to shew and declare, that the Holy Ghost is the author and giver of all spiritual gifts and graces : also, that he is both Lord and God ; who has imparted those various gifts, which are necessary for the mystic body of Christ, and who had bestowed those gifts on them : which gifts he gives an account of, first, generally ; secondly, he enumerates them. He speaks first, thus generally of them : “ Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit,” is both the author and giver of them ; “ And there are differences of administrations,” or offices in the Church ; in which different persons minister, on whom different gifts are bestowed ; they, not being all appointed to fill up one office, but such only to which the Lord had called them, and for which he divinely qualified them. But it was the one same Lord the Spirit, who had shed his graces and gifts, so richly and abundantly, in such an holy variety on them, suited to the offices which they filled up, and in which they were engaged. “ And there are diversities of operations,” *i. e.* of supernatural gifts of working divers miracles, “ but it is the same God which worketh ALL in ALL.”

Then he gives, secondly, an account of those gifts which were peculiar to the primitive Church in the Apostolical age, which are thus enumerated : “ But the manifestation of the Spirit,” or the gifts of the

Spirit, both ordinary and extraordinary, “are given to every man to profit withal,” for the good of the whole Church, to which the least gift or grace, rightly used, or exercised, may contribute. “For to one is given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues.” But, though these gifts, ministrations, or offices, and operations, were so distinct and different in themselves, and bestowed on distinct and different persons; yet, were they all wrought and given by one and the same Spirit of God. So says Paul himself: “But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” And as the end and design of the Holy Spirit in bestowing those gifts were the public, universal good of the Church; so the manner in which they were distributed, served to promote and advance this. For as no one person then had all those gifts, nor any one person now, all spiritual gifts; but several men were then, and still are; variously and severally gifted by the Holy Spirit, to the intent that the members of the Church may mutually depend upon, assist, and help each other; so this is most divinely calculated to promote union and communion between Saints: which is also most beautifully illustrated by a similitude drawn from the oneness and unity of the members in a natural body. In which, one member is serviceable to another, having distinct

employments in relation to the whole. Just so it is in the Church, which is the mystical body of Christ. “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.” Which words are similar to those of the Apostles in the twelfth chapter to the Romans, verses 4, 5. “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” In the Scriptures of the New Testament we read of Christ’s natural body, which he assumed into personal union and subsistence in himself. He also saith of the bread in his administration of his Supper, “This is my body,” *i. e.* a figure, symbol, and memorial of it. And which is called by Divines, his *Sacramental body*. He also hath a *ministerial body*, which is an assembly of Saints incorporated to enjoy ordinances, which is called Christ’s body in the twenty-seventh verse of the chapter from whence our text is taken. In our text, you have the name Christ given to the Church; which is here expressly called *Christ*. The word Christ, which signifies *anointed*, answers to *Messiah*, and is taken here for the mystical body of Christ, which includes both himself the Head, and the Church as his members, which make but one body; so the whole is included and comprised in one name.

It is my design, and will be my present aim and endeavour, to lay before you the following truths, as included and comprehended in the words

before us; the glorious union and communication there is between Christ, and his Church, and that upon this account it is that she is called by, and wears his name. I shall cast the subject into this threefold point of view.

First, the union betwixt Christ and his Church.

Secondly, the communication there is betwixt Christ and his Church.

Thirdly, that it is on this account she is called by, and wears his great and illustrious name, just as a spouse does that of her husband.

For the first particular part of the division of our subject, the union betwixt Christ and his Church; as it respects this great and fundamental mystery of grace, it is a truth which is contained and runs throughout the whole sacred Scriptures. It is commonly said, Jesus Christ is the whole sum and substance of the inspired volume, and it is absolutely true, if by it we understand Christ personal, and Christ mystical. One said, the whole creation was but an explanation of God. Another says, we may truly say of Adam's creation, headship, and universal dominion, over the creatures given him, by the Lord in Paradise, it is nothing else but Christ explained. And *Tertullian* says, the Church is nothing else but Christ unfolded. It is a most glorious truth, which may with safety and propriety be declared, that the Old Testament reveals and gives an account of this most glorious union, which subsists between Christ and his people, in this ineffable way; they, in their remarkable suffering cases, and circumstances, are set forth as types of what their head would be, and of

what he would undergo, as a suffering Mediator, who was to sustain and be encompassed about with the overwhelming billows of divine wrath, to encounter all the power of Satan, and be the butt of envy and malice, against whom the envenomed tongues of the enemies of God, and the Church, would be exercised with the utmost scorn. This will appear as you consider the murder and death of Abel—the persecution, hatred, contempt, imprisonment, sorrow, and debasement of *Joseph*—the bondage, affliction, and sore distress of the *Israelites*, as forerunning symbolical evidences of what the Head of the Church would have to pass through, to the intent he might obtain the everlasting deliverance of his people, from far worse than Egyptian bondage, and to complete their deliverance out of the hands of all their enemies. The foundation of this may appear from considering that Christ and his Church are one, and that he represented them. Therefore it is, that what is applied to Christ in the Old Testament ; is applied to the Church in the New. As for example : In Isaiah l. 8. you read ; “ He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me ? ” which words, though spoken by the Prophet, in the person of the Messiah, yet are they quoted by the Apostle Paul, in the 8th of the Romans, verse 33. and put in the mouths and uttered as the voice of all the elect, who cry out with great boldness, “ Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect ? It is God that justifieth.” The foundation of which quotation, with the application of it to them is laid in this, that Christ is the head and surety of his Church, who



being chosen and appointed by the Father in eternity to be their common Head, and was, as such, set up in his economical office before the worlds were, so he represented his people and engaged for them in all his covenant-acts and transactions with his Father on their behalf. To him as thus viewed and considered, the promise of eternal life was given before the world began. Tit. i. 2. And all the promises which belong to the covenant of grace were made to him as the head of his body the Church; so that on these accounts it is, that those promises made to the Church, under the Old Testament dispensation, because they were first made to Christ, the head of it, and also fulfilled to him, and received their complete accomplishment in him, therefore they are applied in the New Testament to him. Thus for instance : in Hosea, you read, chap. xi. 1. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt ;" which is by Matthew, chap. ii. verse 15, applied to Christ, thus : "Joseph took the young child and his mother, by night, and departed into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod ; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." The truth is this, as there subsisteth between Christ and the Church, an union like that between head and members of the same body, they are therefore called by the same name *Israel*, (Isa. xlix. 3.) and what is said concerning one, frequently admits of an application to the other. As he became like us, by taking our nature, and we are made like him, in receiving his grace ; so, our sufferings are

accounted his, and his righteousness is accounted ours. And, because the deliverance from Egypt was, by virtue of Christ's being delivered out of Egypt himself, therefore this scripture recorded in Hosea, is applied to Christ by Matthew.

Thus also, in the ninth chapter of the prophecy of Zechariah, verse the 11th, we read, and hear, Jehovah the Father, thus addressing the Church: "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water;" which passage is applied to the resurrection of Christ, Heb. xiii. 20, and that, because Christ in his resurrection was one with his Church, and the prisoners of hope in Zechariah, were delivered through that blood by which Jesus Christ was brought again from the dead. Once more: in the 81st Psalm, verse 5, you have God the Saviour, speaking in the person of his people, concerning their departure from Egypt. The words are these: "When he went out through the land of Egypt; where I heard a language that I understood not." Which may be compared with the following scripture: "Thus saith the Lord, about midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt;" and he concludes the sentence thus: "after that I will go out." See Exodus xi. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. In which passage, you may observe, God is said to go out of Egypt, in the persons of his people, which is a proof of the wonderful union which subsists betwixt Christ, and those who are his. This mysterious, divine, and wonderful union, is revealed, and shines forth most gloriously in the scriptures of the New Testament, wherein it is illus-

trated by a variety of figures, and images; as by the union which subsists between an head and its body composed of many members, who receive their life, motion, and strength, from the head; as also by a vine and its branches, which receive their being from the vine, and derive all their sap, nourishment, and support there-from; also by the union between an husband and wife, whereby they become one, and have mutual interest and propriety in each other. And the reality and oneness of it is thus expressed: “He that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit.” It is an eternal, indissoluble union of the persons of all the elect, to the person of Christ, God-man. It is a marriage union: Christ hath betrothed the Church to himself in righteousness, and gives his whole person to his Church, by which act he becomes his people’s husband, portion, and inheritance for ever. Hence it is said, “Thy Maker, is thine husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name.” It is a representative union: Christ represented all his people in every act and part of his mediatorial engagements, work, and offices, and they are interested therein, being one in him, and with him therein.” It is a relative union, he being their Head, and they being his body:—he being their everlasting husband, and they his spouse:—he their everlasting Father, and they his children:—he their Shepherd, and they the sheep of his pasture. It is an immutable union:—it began in eternity, is manifested in time, and made known to the souls of God’s elect through the divine revelation and witness of the Holy Spirit. Union with Christ, relation to his person, interest in him, is

founded upon Jehovah, the Father's everlasting, sovereign, free, immutable love ; which manifested itself in choosing the persons of the elect in Christ, and together with him, before the foundation of the world. Which proves it to be an eternal union, seeing the being and existence in Christ, by election, was from eternity. Of this high, supreme, and ineffable grace, Dr. Goodwin thus writes :—  
“ Union with Christ, is the first fundamental thing of justification, and sanctification, and all. Christ first takes us, and then sends his Spirit. It is not my being regenerate that puts me into a right of all those privileges; but it is Christ takes me, and then gives me his Spirit, faith, and holiness, &c. It is through our union with Christ, and the perfect holiness of his nature, to whom we are united, that we partake of the privileges of the covenant of grace.”  
But, it is my present design to speak simply, of union to Christ in that incomprehensible display of grace, manifested by that act in time ; his taking hold of the nature of his people, and uniting it to himself, whereby he became incarnate ; through which mysterious grace, he became one with his people ; a partaker of their nature. So that, “ He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one,” *i. e.* of one and the same nature. “ For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.”  
Oh ! stupendous, unutterable grace ! the greatness of which cannot be fully known on earth, nor perfectly comprehended in heaven. It is indeed, incomprehensible ! By it, Christ has fully proved that he

loved the human nature, and that his delights were with the sons of men. His assumption of our nature—the persons for whom he became incarnate—the ends of it—with the blessing and benefits resulting from it, are all great ! One end of it was, that in our nature he might express, declare, and shew forth all the love of God, all the bowels of Jehovah's mercy, all the springs of divine clemency, and that, also, in such a manner as suited the cases and state of his people, which might most effectually take with their hearts, warm their souls, and draw their affections after him for ever. The love of Christ, which shone forth in his mysterious incarnation, and all through his incarnate state, is the grand subject set before us in the Gospel, the depths of which we can never sound. It is love which passeth knowledge ! By his incarnation, he became what he was not before, perfect man, as he was perfect God :—and God and man, by personal union ; in whom, as such, *dwelleth all the fulness* of the Godhead. And, as the Head and Mediator of his people, all the fulness of grace and glory dwelleth in him, for their use and benefit, profit, and supply. His mystical body, which is his relative fulness, was to be supplied by and from him. He, “ who thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” was, by his incarnation, made a little lower than the angels,” was seen, wearing the likeness of sinful flesh, and found in fashion as a man. He took our nature, with all the sinless frailties of it, passed through the states of childhood, youth, and manhood, and his whole life

was one continued passion ; a scene of labour and sorrow, of contradiction and persecution. He was afflicted, as never man was, from the hour of his birth (when, thrust out from the society of men, he made his bed in the stable of Bethlehem) to the day of his death. As a victim destined and prepared to die the death due to sin, he tasted of it by anticipation all his days, until *the fierce wrath of his Father went over him, and his terrors cut him off.* The incarnation of Christ, is one of the deepest mysteries of our most holy faith, which lays the foundation for all our hope in God. It engaged the minds of the ancient Patriarchs, and Prophets ; afforded a subject for universal joy to all the spiritual Israel of God, and may be looked on as an all-sufficient ground to expect succour and relief from him, by all who approach him by faith :—because he is our brother and near kinsman after the flesh, and is, as such, suitably disposed to pity and compassionate us. Nor is there any case, trial, or state, any of his people can possibly be in, but he, being man as well as God, may encourage and yield suitable relief unto them ; there being no feeling in human nature, no temptation, grief, burden, or misery, which it is subject to, but he has himself had the experience of, and by his personal union with his people in their nature, which is now a part of himself, he has an inherent affection to, and cannot but be affected with all that which befalls them. He loves them out of a natural affection, which arises from his own heart towards them as his own members :—his bowels are moved towards them ; he feels all their miseries, knows all

their sorrows, having had an experience of them as he passed through the same ; being in all things made like unto his brethren, *sin only excepted*. And we should never consider him otherwise than as God and man united in the person of one Christ ; and that he hath by his becoming like us, in partaking of our nature, given an everlasting evidence of his love and good-will towards us ; and that his exaltation in our nature at the right hand of the Majesty on High, is for our benefit, as well as for his glory. There is no love in his heart, but we are interested in it ; no mercy in his bowels, but it shall be exercised towards us ; his arm shall be our support, and himself will be our shield, and defence ; his glory shall one day fully pass before us, when we shall see *Immanuel*, God in our nature, and enjoy him therein, fully and eternally. This brings me—

Secondly, to set forth and shew the communication that there is betwixt Christ, and his Church. It should be closely attended to by all the called people of God, and they should pray the Holy Spirit to enlighten their minds, and establish their hearts, in the knowledge and belief of their union with the person of Christ, as this makes the way clear for them to enjoy free and spiritual communion with him. It is good for them that they should be brought to know, from the word, and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that Christ was their eternal head in election, in whom they were chosen, to whom they were given, and to whom they were united, in whom they were blessed, and accepted, before all time, by

God their heavenly Father ; and that they were considered in him, as represented in all his federal acts, and undertakings. And, though it would not be right to say, Christ represented them by his incarnation, that being an act wholly personal ; yet he became incarnate, that in his own person, he, as their head, surety, and representative, might act, and suffer for them. As he loves his mystic body, with the same love wherewith he loved himself ; so, in loving his people, he may be said to love himself, as in saving them, he may, be said, yea, he is said, to save himself. Zech. ix. 9. He, blessings on him ! obeyed as the Head of his Church, the *whole* law, in the room, and stead of his people :—was *made sin*—their sin, by the Father's act of imputation, and bore their iniquities *in his own body on the tree* : He, for them, in personal union with them, and as a partaker of their nature, suffered the *just for the unjust*. He died for them—was buried for them—rose again for them—ascended on high, and entered heaven as their forerunner, in their names, on their behalf, and is set down at God's right hand, as the common public head of his Church and people ;—and, when he comes again the second time, *without sin unto salvation*, thus it is written of him, “The Lord my God shall come, and all the Saints with thee.” Zech. xiv. 5. All which, being wrought out and performed by Christ in union with the persons of his people, it may be truly said of them, that they suffered in his stripes, died in him, when he died for sin ; were buried in him, and with him ;



were raised in, and together with him; ascended, and are seated in heavenly places in, and together with him :—this being the case virtually, as they are the members of the Lord Jesus, being incorporated into him; and these are the blessed fruits of their union to and interest in him. The Apostle tells the Saints at Ephesus, in his epistle wrote to them, that God had quickened them together with Christ, “and hath (saith he) raised us up together, and made us sit together, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.” See Ephes. ii. 5, 6. It is good for a believer to view himself by faith in Christ, before the world was—to consider himself mystically in Christ, when he obeyed, and when he was made sin, and a curse; and to view himself cleansed, healed, pardoned, justified, and sanctified, by the *offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all*. Then let him ascend by faith, and enter through the exercise of it, on the blood of his great High Priest, *into the holiest of all*, and behold himself in the person of his beloved Jesus, shining in the sight of his heavenly Father, with lustre, splendour, and refulgent excellency, brighter, and more glorious, than elect angels do. This will give him cause to praise Jehovah the Father, for the inestimable blessing of union to, and interest in, the person of Christ, his salvation, and glory. As the fruit and consequence of which union, between the person of Christ, and his Church, flows a most blessed, holy, perfect, and free communion, which, as it respects the people of God, is both passive and active. It is first passive: for all life, motion, and

sense, is from the head. Thus it is, as it respects Christ, whose Church is as an empty vessel, his relative fulness which he means to fill out of, and from his inexhaustible fulness, with all the fulness of God. Christ admits his Church and people, into communion, and fellowship, with him in his names, titles, relations, grace, fulness, salvation, blessings, and benefits. . As he is by his co-existence in the Godhead, the essential Son of God, and by predetermination, God-man, so his brethren are the adopted sons of God, and by virtue of the marriage-union between Christ and them, they have his Father, for their Father, and his God, for their God. It is his incommunicable title which belongs solely to him, *the only-begotten Son of God*; and believers, because they belong to him, are, though in a far lower sense, called the sons of God. See 1 John iii. 1. He is called, Col. i. 15, *the first-born of every creature*, which is spoken of him as God-man, and his renewed and called ones are styled, *a kind of first-fruits of God's creatures*, James i. 18. He is said to be *the first-born among many brethren*, Rom. viii. 29; and we are said to be *the Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven*, Heb. xii. 23. His name is the Beloved, Ephes. i. 6, and the people of God are styled, *beloved of God*, Rom. i. 7. He, as God-man, is the fellow of the Lord of Hosts, and is so called, Zech. xiii. 7, and the members of his mystical body, are styled his *fellows*, or equals, Psa. xlv. 7. She, *i. e.* the Church, is the glory of Christ, his delight, joy, crown, and royal diadem. See Isa. lxii. 3. He is not complete without her, she being

a part of his fulness. She is his social glory, and a glory will result to his person, from the glory which he communicates and will put upon her. Is Christ the heir of all things? Believers are *heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ*. Is he styled, a Living Stone? They also are called *Lively Stones*, as receiving and partaking life from him. Is it his title, *King of Saints*? They are said to be made *Kings and Priests* to God by him. Rev. i. 6. Christ's love is manifested to them, in his delight in them, they are his Hephzibah's and Beulah's, whom he delighteth in. In his valuation of them—" *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.*" Isa. xliii. 4—In his pity and compassion towards them—" *In all their affliction he was afflicted:—in his love and in his pity, he redeemed them—and carried them.*" Isa. lxiii. 9. In his bounty and good-will towards them, of which he speaks thus—" *I will rejoice over them to do them good—with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.*" Jer. xxxii. 41. As the Church hath communion with Christ, in his names and titles, so likewise in his relations, and communicable privileges. Is he chosen? so are we! Is he beloved? so are we! He first, and then we in a conformity to him. "God the Father hath predestinated us unto adoption, that is, a Sonship-in-law, in and through Christ, his natural Son." All the privileges in this world, and in the world to come, are included in Sonship and adoption; yea, every one of them are actually bestowed upon us, as to present right and title. "Beloved, now are we the Sons of God; and,

“ if a Son, then an Heir, a Co-heir with Christ ; yea, an Heir of God,” to possess and enjoy God, as Christ doth. “ When Christ shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” And, in proportion as he enjoys God, so shall we ; yea, we shall have and inherit all things. For it is said, “ He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son.” Rev. xxi. 7. Adoption contains all the great dignity of a Christian in this life, and a right to that fulness of glory, whereby we shall be like to Christ in his glory. We have fellowship with Christ in his name ; we are (as he is) Sons of God—fellowship in title and right of inheritance, being Heirs of God, and Co-heirs with Christ—we have fellowship in likeness and conformity to Christ ; we, being predestinated to be conformed to his image ; see Rom. viii. 29.—fellowship with him in honour ; he is not ashamed to call us brethren—we have also fellowship with him in his grace ; his fulness is ours to supply us, and the Church, as Christ’s relative fulness, considered as in union with him, is complete, having a fulness of inexhaustible grace and glory in him, which belongs to her, and may be considered as her own. On which account, Paul says, *ye are complete in him*. The Church hath also communion with Christ in his salvation, blessings, and benefits, all which belong, and are imputed and reckoned to her, and also bestowed on her. This communion is most blessed, perfect, holy, and free. Christ, the Head, quickeneth all his members, imparteth spiritual life unto them, by virtue of his union with them, and in re-

generation, sends his Holy Spirit into them, who translates them out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of God's dear Son ; by which means they are carried off their old stock, and spiritually implanted into Christ ; by which means also, through the further operations, teachings, and testimony of the Holy Spirit, they are brought to know their mutual and united interest in Christ, and his interest in them.

By virtue of spiritual implantation into Christ, which is the fruit of eternal union to his person, and interest in the whole of his Mediatorial work and offices, they receive the Holy Spirit, are made partakers of the divine nature, have a revelation of Christ made to them, and are transformed by the renewing of their minds ; which makes way for a real communion in sensible experience, by divine manifestations to be held between Christ and his quickened, and believing people.

Now Christ liveth in them, to quicken, impart, continue, and maintain, spiritual and everlasting life in them. *Christ liveth in me, saith Paul, Gal. ii. 20.* He is their life, and all their breathings, motions, and actions of spiritual life, are entirely from him alone. He is to them as the soul is to the body, and like as the soul liveth and dwelleth in the body ; so Christ liveth and dwelleth in them, by virtue of which in-dwelling, ten thousand influences of spiritual life are put forth within us, and ten thousand acts of grace towards us, which our faith is in no wise privy to. So that, let believers be thankful for this grace, Christ is in them, when

faith doth not operate and work ; when he enters to dwell in us, he comes to abide in us for ever: Though there be various frames, seasons, temptations, and distresses, which befall us, when we cannot perceive Christ to be in us by faith, yet, blessed be his name, he dwelleth in the souls of his called people, and works in them when they act not, and know not their union, nor that, he works. “ It were ill indeed with us,” as Dr. Goodwin says, “ If Christ did not work more in us, than we have faith for, or the knowledge of, our faith is too narrow to limit and bound his operations by.” In Christ’s communications of himself to us, we are passive. He shews us his glory, fills our hearts with his love, our understandings with the knowledge of himself, our minds with his peace, and then he makes us active. What he shews of himself, his grace, salvation and glory, draws out the hearts, desires, and affections, of his beloved people after him. They have their seasons, when they are ravished with his love ; when they find themselves breathed upon by the Eternal Spirit, and their graces blown up and drawn forth into act and exercise towards their beloved Saviour ; at which times, through the divine agency of the Sacred Spirit, they have actually communion with Jesus, in spiritual actings of faith on him, as their souls in the exercise of their graces are led forth to embrace, close and converse with him. Thus a believer, in an unspeakable way, enjoys his Lord, feels his presence, rejoices in his salvation, converses with him, and experiences the virtue of his sacrifice, blood, and death, in his own soul: which affords unutterable joy, pro-

duces peace which passeth all understanding, fixes the heart and hope solely on him, captivates all the affections, and knits them wholly to him, and produces this as the ultimate of all desires, praying as Paul did, to be found *in Him*. The whole salvation of Jesus, is the believer's. It belongs to him, and is wrought out for him, and it wholly resides, with all its blessings and benefits, in the person of the Redeemer, *in whom we have redemption*. He is completely holy, righteous, and spotless, out of himself, in the person, holiness, righteousness, and atonement of Christ. When he sees this in the light of faith, he triumphs over sin, and the fall with all its tremendous consequences; renounces all his being received from the first Adam, and values the grace which gave him being in the *second Adam, the Lord from heaven*; viewing also with inexpressible admiration, himself fully entitled to all the blessings and benefits of Christ's life, and death, victories and triumphs. Now all this communication between Christ and his Church, is the blessed fruit and effect of his union with her, and her union to him; by virtue of which, he imparteth himself to her, bestows his whole salvation on her, with all the blessings and benefits of it, and holds free and holy fellowship with his people, by his blessed Spirit in their hearts; giving them repeated evidences and assurances of his delight in them. This brings me, thirdly, to shew, that this union betwixt Christ and his Church, is the reason why she is called by, and wears his great and illustrious name, just as a spouse does that of her husband.

If Christ and his people were one in election, he the Head, and they the members: if he represented and undertook for them in the everlasting covenant, and took their nature into personal union with himself, that he might fulfil his engagements, by taking their sins upon himself, and sustaining their griefs: it must follow, that what he is in his person, and hath performed in his life and death for them, fully proves, that he and they are one. So that there cannot but follow a free communication of life, blessings, gifts, graces, benefits, and privileges. The Church, is Christ's body, given to him by the Father, as the fruit of his ineffable love; who, as over and above all gifts beside, gave him to be Head over all things to his Church. Indeed, the head, Christ, transcends the body beyond all comparison; but still it is not the greatness of his majesty will ever cause him to overlook his beloved bride. And, though it will be his incommunicable honour, to sit at God's right hand; yet he wills it, and so it shall be, that his queen, the Church, shall sit at his right hand in gold of Ophir. *Psa. xlv. 9.* Now as she is thus closely united to him, by an eternal marriage-union and relation; so she is called by his name, Christ; and wears it to her honour, to denote that she belongs to him, and is his darling, his one and only beloved, who is in his sight all fair, without any spot in her. If it be asked, how she came to have this name given her? it may be answered, that it was her due, in consequence of her relation and union to the person of her heavenly bridegroom, and she was Christed by him who gave this name to her



everlasting lover. It was the Holy Ghost, who gave this name to our Jesus, who was anointed by him, and declared to be the Christ of God. That rich perfume, odour, and fulness of grace, shed on him by the Spirit, whereby all his garments, every part of his body and soul, was fragrant, and yielded a rich savour indeed, so that the Prophet cried out, *all thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and Cassia* ; gave him his name, *Christ Messiah*, or *Anointed*. And thus, because his people receive the same anointing from the same Holy Spirit, in their measure and degree, as it pleaseth him, therefore they are called *Christians*, *Christs*, or *Anointed Ones*. Believers, under the Old Testament, were the typical Prophets, and Messiahs, or Christs, of Jehovah, of whom he said, *touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm.*" Psa. cv. 15. And believers, under the present dispensation, are called *Christians*, or, *Anointed Ones*, because anointed by the Holy Ghost. The Church, as a collection of believers, is called, as in our text, *Christ* ; just as the Church in the 33d of Jeremiah, is called by the incommunicable name of her husband ; " this," says the Prophet there, " *is the name wherewith she shall be called, Jehovah, our righteousness* ;" to point out wherein her glory lay, and where her righteousness always shone forth, even in the person of her heavenly husband, whose name is *Jehovah, our righteousness*. His name of essence is, *Jehovah*—of office, our *righteousness*, which, as fully opened and explained in the New Testament, is, for the substance of it, *the great God, even our Saviour, Jesus Christ* ; the

Lord, head, and husband of his spouse, the Church. This name is then given her by the Holy Ghost, who knows Christ's heart towards her, and sees her clothed in the righteousness of Immanuel, who takes up his habitation in her, consecrating her for uninterrupted fellowship with him in eternal glory. She may well wear this name on earth, as she will wear it for ever in heaven. And, as before our Lord's coming in the flesh, it was the one grand design of the Holy Spirit, to give a view of Immanuel's glory, to present him to the thoughts and minds of the elect, to prepare their hearts to long for his coming; and as, when he came, the Spirit rested with all the fulness of grace and glory on him; and after his ascension, descended from heaven, in a visible symbol, to grace his triumphs, and glorify him; so the same Holy Spirit, now descends upon the Church, and gives such accounts of her holiness, righteousness, purity and perfection, fulness and riches, in consequence of her relation to the Lord Jesus, that she may wear most justly her husband's name, and be styled, *Christ Mystical*, seeing, that in her, both in time, and eternity, all his manifestative glory, as her head, and inheritance, is to shine forth. Sirs! we see the Church, at present, but imperfect, because we do not view her in her glorious head. It requires divine light from the Spirit to behold the Church as she really is in God's sight, and account. Even the beloved John, when he saw her in vision, *descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God*, it so exceeded his expectations, and transported him, that he fell down to worship, before the feet of the

132 *Christ Mystical bears the same Title, &c.*

Angel who shewed him these things. See Rev. xxi. 10, 11 ; and chap. xxii. 8. There are glories belonging to Christ Mystical, which faith cannot fully take in and explore—She is to shine, as *having the glory of God* ; who himself will be her everlasting glory—She is to be brought into the King's presence in raiment of gold, the robe of everlasting righteousness, to wear her husband's illustrious incommunicable name, and to sit at his right hand ; as worthy of his everlasting esteem and delight—She is to be immutably holy, and adorned like the bride, the Lamb's wife, with every perfection—She is to have communion with the person of her beloved, and to behold his personal incommunicable glory. This awaits her. In the interim, she is led on in such a way and manner, as will serve to endear Christ to her. She is as safe, and as complete in Christ now, as she will then be, being as fully justified, cleansed, and pardoned. She is now but in a state of grace, which state, though perfect ; yet, she hath not a perfect enjoyment of the blessings of it ; but, she is to be ere long in a state of glory, in which she will be filled with all the fulness of God.—Then it is, that the Lord will be her everlasting light, and her God, her glory. May you have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, as the Spirit of Christ, and glory, and be kept looking for, and hastening to the coming of the day of God. And may the Lord bless what hath been delivered, as far as seems good in his sight. *Amen.*

# SERMON VI.

THE GOSPEL A PURE REVELATION OF GRACE.

GALATIANS I. 11, 12.

*But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

**T**HESE words are a spiritual certificate, drawn up with most exact precision, delivered with the utmost integrity, pronounced, signed, sealed, and witnessed by infallible and Apostolic authority.

This epistle contains an ancient piece of sacred controversy, in which that prime, fundamental, and grand doctrine—justification by the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, imputed by Jehovah the Father, to all the elect, is treated, stated, and defended: it may be said here that, that important question proposed in the book of Job, “How shall man be just with God?” is answered. The one, perfect, sinless, and divine obedience of Jesus—answers all the demands of the law, and by it, many are made righteous. The Churches in Galatia, though built upon Christ, the only tried and everlasting foun-

dation, and watered with the preaching of many ; had met with a trial, whereby their faith had been assaulted, and they were in danger of departing from the truth as it is in Jesus.—They, through some Judaizing teachers, had been led off, from the simplicity of the Gospel. I confess I differ in my sentiment concerning these Churches from those, who suppose their chief error lay in mixing something with the righteousness of Christ, for justification ; I rather conceive, they were sound in this grand article, but that they wanted to see, and find something in themselves which might encourage them to rest upon Christ, for salvation. I ground my conjecture in part upon these words—“ O, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes, Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you ? ” And as so represented, had been declared, and by them had been professed to be sufficient for every purpose of salvation, and that by a view of him, the whole heart was drawn, and all the affections were fixed on him, as the great ordinance of God, for salvation. Also, these words strengthen me in my conjecture—“ Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace. For we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” They looked into and within themselves, for graces to comfort their hearts and support their hope with. They were more for doing than for believing ; and expected sanctification to be promoted and increased by their religious observances of divine institutions

yea, even by the abrogated rite of circumcision ; which diverted them from the act of simple faith on the Son of God, who is the sanctification, as well as the righteousness of his people ; and who has all the fulness of grace in himself, and imparts it from his fulness to his beloved and chosen ones—who receive in believing, such communications from him ; as make them truly happy and holy. I apprehend these persons wanted an inward ground and foundation to build their faith and hope in Christ upon, which was in fact, wholly to overlook the finished salvation of Jesus, he being, in a sense, of no effect unto them, while they remained under such an infatuation and influence. To the end that they might be recovered from this error, and restored to proper views and apprehensions of Gospel grace, the Apostle directs this letter unto them, and after expressing his surprise at their departure from the pure Gospel, which had been preached amongst them, he saith—“ Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”—He goes on, as a Man of God, filled with zeal for the honour of the Lord Jesus, and repeats and expresses again the same words—“ As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” Upon which he proceeds to reason with them thus—“ For, do I now persuade men, or God ?” Am I standing up for that which is of no moment ? Am I not rather pleading the cause of God and truth ? or do I seek to please men ?

“ For, if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” Then come in the words before us—“ But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me, is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” In discoursing from these words, I will endeavour to cast the subject matter of the text, into the following particulars.

First, I will attempt to give you a precise account and explanation of my text.

Secondly, I will aim to shew and prove, that the Gospel cannot be spiritually known and received, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, I will set before you some of the effects and fruits of this Revelation of the Gospel, to the real children of the Most High. I am, in the *first place*, to attempt to give you a precise account and explanation of my text. The matter declared, being of infinite moment, and everlasting importance, hence the Apostle is at a point with respect to the certainty of it. He had in his own soul incontestable evidence of the reality, power, truth, and efficacy of the Gospel; so that he both wrote and spoke of what he knew—had seen—felt, and handled, and says—*I certify you*, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man.” He styles these whom he addressed, *brethren*, which leads to the following remark. That persons may be in Christ, and also true and real believers on him, and yet hesitate about, and not cordially receive some divine truths, in which the grace of the

Holy and Eternal Trinity, may shine forth as clear as the sun. It is one thing to believe in Christ, and another to see clearly, to view with faith distinctly and particularly the essential—personal—and Mediatorial glories, excellencies, and beauties, of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of his Church—the Saviour of his people—the King of Glory. These persons were born again, and had received Christ into their hearts by faith, though they were warped from Christ as it respected the steadfastness of their faith in him. Paul addresses them in this affectionate manner, which could not fail working upon them, and it might make way for their more ready acceptation of what he wrote unto them.—“I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me, is not after man.” It was wholly divine, as it respected the *original*—the *great subject matter*—and the *blessings and benefits* of it. The Gospel is a pure Revelation of the love—mercy—and grace, of the Father—Son—and Holy Ghost—“The Three that bear record in heaven.” The deepest mystery revealed in it, and made known by it, is the distinct personality of the co-equal and co-eternal persons, who, by essential union with the Godhead, (which is the fountain of the divine *persons*) co-exist in it, and are “in glory equal, in majesty co-eternal.” The same in substance, equal in power, and are alike equally concerned in every act of creation—providence—and grace. The *fœderal acts*—*transactions*—*council*—and *covenant* of the *Eternal Three*, are the foundation and original of the



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everlasting gospel. From thence the springs of divine clemency flow. In the covenant of grace, and by the engagements of the Holy and Blessed Trinity in it, the fullest and clearest manifestation of their divine personalities is exhibited, made known, and declared. And the mysteries revealed—the truths declared—the love discovered—the mercy displayed—the mines of free grace opened, and made manifest, by the Gospel, prove it to be of divine original. So that Paul might well say—"I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel, which was preached of me, is not after man." It is all of God, in which his brightest manifestative glory shines forth—his holiness, justice, truth, and power, are illustriously honoured—his everlasting love, mercy, and free grace, are expressed to the uttermost. It being one of the peculiar and distinguishing glories of it, to inform us—that "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The Gospel which is the *wisdom of God*, in a mystery—which angels admire, for the depth and pathos of wisdom which is in it—which contains, and reveals the *unsearchable riches of Christ*—was not made known to Paul by the preaching of men. "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it;" no, not by the preaching and personal ministry of Christ himself, from whom the rest of the Apostles had received it, and by whom they had been taught it—"But I, (saith Paul) received it (for so we must understand him) by the Revelation of Jesus Christ." Which was immediately upon

his regeneration and conversion to the Lord, at which time the Lord Christ, who appeared in a vision to him, said—"I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." See Acts xxvi. 16: At which time, our Lord gave this his servant, such knowledge of himself—and so great a light into the mysteries—truths—doctrines, and ordinances of the Gospel, as immediately fitted and furnished him for the preaching and publication of it—which he did with a zeal peculiar to himself—with love ever burning bright, and pure like a seraph—keeping and maintaining the Gospel pure—incorrupt—and unmixed—He being set for the defence of it: valuing it, next to personal interest in Christ, his highest glory and honour, to preach salvation to poor sinners, as wrought out and finished by the blessed Immanuel. And before I close this first head, I would beg you to consider—how inestimably precious the Gospel, as revealed by Christ himself to Paul—and as delivered by him in his writings and epistles, ought to be to us. Every doctrine of it is more precious than heaven or earth. Every truth in it is sealed with the blood of Christ.—And as for the worth of it—it cannot be purchased with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. "The gold and the crystal cannot equal it."—The Gospel is everlasting—its truths and promises immutable—its blessings irreversible—and the *word* and *oath* of the Eternal Three, which are given and uttered to seal and confirm it,

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are irrevocable. This brings me, secondly, to shew and prove, that the Gospel cannot be spiritually known and received, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ. By the Gospel, I mean and understand—that pure Revelation of grace, which informs us how all the love, mercy, and grace, of Godhead, flow forth towards and upon the elect in the *person*, and through the *mediation* of the Lord Jesus Christ; who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; in whom, as God-man, dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead. And, as there is the glory of the Sun, and the glory of the beams of the Sun; so there is a glory that is in, and which shines forth in the person of Christ; and there are the glorious beams of this Sun of Righteousness, which shine forth in the works of mediation which he hath wrought, and in the fruits and benefits of it, and also in the truths of the Gospel. I conceive the Gospel simply, and precisely to be, a display of grace and mercy towards an elect remnant of Adam's posterity. That it is wholly the fruit of everlasting love, and originates from an ancient council, in which the co-equal and co-eternal Trinity, by a distinct act of will, gave being and form to what we style the everlasting covenant, which is thus expressed by the Apostle—"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Christ was instituted and appointed by the covenant which obtained among the persons in the Godhead, to be the one sole medium and ordinance of salvation. By whose incarnation—obedience—blood-shedding

and sacrifice, everlasting righteousness, was to be brought in—an end made of sin—transgression finished—reconciliation accomplished—Satan bruised, and eternally conquered—and death and the grave, swallowed up by Christ, with everlasting victory and triumph. The blessings—benefits—privileges, and graces of the Gospel are, as I think, fruits and effects of salvation, finished in Christ, and by him; and are *things which accompany salvation*. They are not parts of salvation, but what naturally flow from it. It appears to me, that strictly speaking, God the Father's calling Christ to the great work of Redemption—engaging him to accomplish it—and laying upon him the sins of his people, and imposing upon him all the sorrows, sufferings, and wrath, due to those sins—together with Christ's bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, and making his soul an offering for sin, contains the whole Gospel. I acknowledge it may be safely said, that the Gospel contains an account of Christ—his work—salvation, and benefits. And beyond this, it does not extend. For there is no precept, command, or threatening contained in it. It is true, in the Scripture, which contains this Revelation of grace, there are, many branches of duty exhibited, many exhortations given, and many commands enforced; also, some threatenings expressed—yet this doth not invalidate what I asserted as my judgment before. All precepts must belong to the law. All duties and commands in the New Testament are urged upon believers in Christ, from Gospel motives, and all excitations to them, are drawn from

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the love which Christ bears to his people, and from the great Redemption which he hath obtained for them ; which Redemption is eternal, and as a proof of it, Christ is ascended up on high—is actually crowned in heaven with glory, and honour—and wears the same name there which he did at his birth—and on the cross—Jesus, the Saviour of his people, who hath saved them, in himself, with an everlasting salvation—which salvation, is one of his highest achievements, and the glory which results from it, one of the brightest jewels in his mediatory crown. Peter, speaking of Christ, says—“ Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince, and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Acts v. 31. Our Christ, in his person—work, and offices—word, and promises, is immutably the same. He is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” And his Gospel is as immutable as his person, it cannot change nor alter. It is always glad tidings—good news—yea, the best which ever came from heaven. At the birth of our Redeemer, God the Father, sends down his messengers, not only to tell us that his Son was born into the world, but to assure us that he brought nothing with him—but grace and peace—and the reconciliation of a God, before angry—unto lost and desperate rebels. It is thus the angels, (who certainly with the greatest exactness discharged their commission) without one word of Christ’s being a new legislator, or coming as a second Moses, to deliver a new law from Mount Zion, as he did from Sinai, proclaim the Gospel to be a most solemn de-

claration of God's gracious designs and purposes to sinners unworthy of his favour, Luke ii. 13, 14; "and suddenly there was with the Angel, a multitude of the Heavenly Host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." Thus, in the first delivery of this message, there is no voice but of peace, no sounding claps of thunder, as from Sinai at the promulgation of the law, but the songs of Angels rejoicing in the restored happiness of elect men, their fellow-creatures; no affrighting flashes of lightning, but a soft and gentle brightness shining from the face of a covenant God, and diffusing itself through the air, and without any hurtful or consuming flame; Luke ii. 9. "And lo, the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid." Though they were a little astonished at the first appearance of so strange and unusual a sight; yet, the sense which they had, that it was only an innocent lambent fire about their heads; and the encouraging words of the Angel re-assured them, verses 10, 11; that it is not a judge, but a Saviour, who is come into the world; nor are there any threatenings denounced, as at the giving of the law were necessary, but they hear promises of mercy. There is no sentence of death given, nor warrants issued out for the execution of guilty criminals; but, God the Father, honours his Son's birth-day, with a large and very comprehensive act of pardon; when this his Son, his *solace* and *delight* in eternal ages, before any creature was made, steps down from heaven,

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he doth not merely declare the great *pleasure and satisfaction* he hath in this glorious God-man, but he evidenceth what this infinitely excellent person is to him, in the most surprising *effects* of *goodness and grace*. He proclaims, that for his sake only, he can regard his elect of men with the eyes of favour and kindness, who, in their own persons, were only objects of detestation and abhorrence. And therefore, though he freely loved them from eternity, his benevolence was never openly published till now. As it is only for the sake of Christ, whom God infinitely loves, that he can take any delight in his chosen; so it is not till this great and adorable Son comes upon earth, that he proclaims, “peace and good will towards men.” This God from heaven hath declared, and some of the best men which ever lived upon earth, have also plainly declared, that the Gospel is a pure act of grace; in which, the secret covenant of God, concerning salvation by Christ, is made known to men fallen into sin; and with the elect is begun, and preserved for their salvation, and the glory of God the Saviour:—but to proceed. The Gospel being an open declaration of what was acted and transacted within the vail, amongst the divine persons before all time, it cannot be known without a Revelation be made of it—and the Gospel contains this grace—which is therein made clear and manifest. It would be well with us, if we believed this truth more steadfastly, that the everlasting grace, love, and salvation of Jesus, are all set before us in the revealed and written word; and that we cannot understand the least tittle of it, to

any good purpose, without the inspiration and teaching of the Holy Spirit. I grant a notional ideal knowledge of divine truth may be, where the Holy Spirit hath not spiritually quickened and renewed the soul. But, I conceive a vast difference to be between a bare knowledge of Gospel truths—doctrines—and ordinances—and a spiritual knowledge of Christ, and his salvation; which can only be truly apprehended—received, and embraced, by the inward Revelation and application of the Holy Spirit. As Toplady expressed it—“Regeneration is the best door, for the entrance of the doctrines of grace into the heart:”—yea, it is the only true channel of its safe conveyance. The Gospel contains spiritual and supernatural truths, therefore it cannot be perceived without spiritual and supernatural light. And true spirituality discovers itself, by admiring spiritual things, and truths, upon account of the spirituality which appears in them. Hence the Apostle says—“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them.” Why? “Because they are spiritually discerned.”—As we cannot see the Sun but in its own light, so we cannot see Christ and the salvation in him, but in his own light, and by his beams of sacred illumination, by which he irradiates our minds, making us light in the Lord. In the days when Christ tabernacled here below, he proposed it to his Disciples as a question, What the thoughts and sayings of men were concerning him?—All wrong thoughts of Christ, will lead to wrong speeches of, and concern-



ing him ; and will prove in the issue, to be of fatal consequence to the souls of men. *Peter*, the senior man amongst the Apostles, when an answer had been returned to the question ; hearing Christ propose a second, which was a close one indeed :—“ Whom say ye that I am ? ” without the least hesitation replied—“ Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.” Hereupon our Lord pronounces him blessed, and says, “ Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” It was from heaven—from Christ’s Father in heaven, Peter came to know and receive a true knowledge and spiritual perception of the person and salvation of Christ. Again, when our Lord rejoiced in Spirit, and opens the cause of his joy in his address to his divine Father, he says—“ I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father ; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son—and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” And the Holy Spirit is styled—*The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation*. By his inspiration, the Scriptures were given. Holy men *spoke* and *wrote* as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It is by him that what is wrote and spoke in them concerning Christ, becomes effectual to salvation ; for no man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. It is by him, the mind is enlightened into the knowledge of Christ in the word, and is brought to believe

on Christ with the heart. “We know (saith John) that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.” But how came they by a new enlightened understanding, by which they knew the Son of God—his great end and design in coming into the world; and their own peculiar and personal interest in him? It was all from the Spirit, who was made the sole Author of their regeneration and conversion to God. Every true thought they had of Christ came entirely from him. Every act of spiritual faith exercised upon Christ, was through his mighty and powerful influence and working in them and upon them. All the real communion which was carried on between Christ and their souls; was wholly his own work—He revealing Christ to them—enlightened their faith with spiritual sights of the beloved Saviour—drawing forth their faith to lay hold upon him, to cleave to him, to centre in, and rest entirely on him—and to have some actual converse with him; so that he became to them in heart and affection, in desire and esteem, their ALL in ALL: their one chiefest, and only beloved, whom they esteemed, preferred, and prized beyond all; so as to count all things but dross and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord.—If the Gospel cannot be known but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ, then it becomes us to value the Gospel which reveals Christ, and it is worth our careful attention and examination, to consider what we know of Christ and him crucified by the inward teachings and Revela-

tion of the Holy Ghost. The word contains an outward, open, clear Revelation of Christ, and by it the Holy Ghost enlightens the mind with a real spiritual understanding of the *person, obedience, and sacrifice* of Jesus—draws the will to choose him—the heart to love him—the conscience to rest satisfied with his most precious blood-shedding. In a word, God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into the hearts of his true and faithful people; to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face or person of Jesus Christ. This brings me,

Thirdly, to set before you some of the effects and fruits of this Revelation of the Gospel, to the real children of the Most High. One grand fruit and effect of this Revelation of the Gospel, to the real children of the Most High, is a revealing Christ unto them, and in them, as their hope of glory. By it they are led to know, and spiritually to believe—experience, and enjoy—the love of God the Father—the salvation of God the Son, and the grace of God, the Holy Ghost. The preaching of the Gospel, as it is accompanied by and followed with the influence and energy of the Holy Spirit, produces the true and saving knowledge of God in his divine persons, and how they stand engaged to us in the economy of the covenant. And I have solemnly aimed at this in my preaching it, the glory of the divine Trinity, pointing out this as the highest attainment in spiritual knowledge, the original of the Gospel in the *eternal transactions* of the blessed Three—and this as the prime excellency and height in Christian ex-

perience, personal communion and fellowship with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I conceive this to be the fruit of receiving the Gospel, that Christ is formed in the heart—that the love of God is shed abroad in it, and the Holy Spirit dwells and makes his abode in the soul. I will endeavour to confirm this from the Scripture, how the Eternal Three are declared to dwell in those who are the called according to God's eternal purpose. The Father dwells in us. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us," 1 John iv. 12, 13, 15. And hereby know we, that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.—Whosoever shall confess, that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Jesus Christ dwelleth in us by faith, see Ephes. iii. 17. Christ liveth in me, saith Paul, Gal. ii. 20. "Know ye not that Christ is in you?" saith he to the Corinthians, 2 Cor. xiii. 5; the Spirit is also said to dwell in us—"He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you," Romans viii. 11. Though I have cited Scripture, yet you are like to overlook it, therefore I will endeavour to come down unto the least and meanest spiritual capacity, and explain and prove this great mystery and truth to you. If thou art but a babe in Christ, then thou knowest, and dost in thine own experience find the truth of what Christ hath spoken—"He that believeth hath everlasting life." Now let me ask thee, these following questions: Who was it quickened thy soul, and made thee acquainted with Jesus Christ? was it not the Holy Spirit? He is the

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Lord and giver of spiritual life. Dost thou not find that the Holy Spirit dwelleth in thee, and consecrates thy heart, and influences thy affections, carrying thee out in acts of faith, and hope, and love, towards our Lord Jesus Christ? Does he not, at some peculiar seasons, fill thine heart with the love of God, thy heavenly Father; so that thy soul is, for a time, swallowed up in the enjoyment of it? This is to have fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: which is in experience the profoundest mystery of grace, and yet it is enjoyed more or less by all saints. You will sometimes find the whole of your spiritual faculties taken up with the contemplations, and filled with the enjoyment of God the Father's love, in loving you from eternity—giving you to Christ—and blessing you in him with all spiritual blessings. You will also find God comes down into your souls by the manifestations of his love and grace—by which you will know that God is love, and that he that dwelleth in the contemplations of God's everlasting love, dwelleth in God and God in him. Here then is an explanation to you, suited to real, genuine, Gospel experience, how God the Father dwelleth in us. There are other seasons, when your whole souls are drawn forth towards the Lord Jesus, as the immediate object of your faith, and you hold converse with him in the exercise of faith upon him; by which means, Christ dwelleth in your hearts. We view Christ by faith, as the visive faculty of sight, doth an object. And as the sight of a person conveys the idea of him to the heart; so doth a real spiritual sight of Christ convey a true

and proper idea of him to the believer ; so that he hath here below as true a knowledge of the person, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, as he will ever have in heaven. And when he sees Christ face to face, he will see the same Jesus whom he before beheld by faith, through a glass darkly. Mark what I say. The believer has a true and real spiritual knowledge of Christ by faith, which is a spiritual faculty, and which is created by the Holy Ghost, and by him enlightened to take in the knowledge of Christ, as crucified, and crowned with glory and honour ; and, it is by the same medium we shall take in more full sights, and know more of Jesus, in the heaven of heavens. The Saints there know more of Christ, but they do not know him more really than the Saints on earth. They in glory enjoy him more fully, yet their enjoyments are not more real than the Saints on earth. Now when by the presence and grace of Jesus, you enjoy him, then you find the truth of what I asserted, that Christ liveth in you, dwelleth in you, sups with you, yea, at some high seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord—Christ and his Father come and make their abode in your souls. So as it respects the Holy Spirit, there are experiences recorded in the memoirs of real Saints, when the Holy Spirit is pleased to reveal and let in upon their minds, a sense and view of his love ; giving them a full tide of gracious influences—filling them with divine consolation, and leading them into divine communion with him. Whereby they understand that he dwelleth in them, and is the spring—fountain—and root—of all spiritual life and grace within them—that he will dwell in them for ever,

making them an habitation for the Father and the Son to dwell in to all eternity. These things are, I think, much more clear and perceivable in experience, than I can possibly explain them by words. For my part, I never yet conversed with one whom I thought entitled to the name of Saint, but I always perceived in the experience related, traces, and evidences, of their having in the secrets of their own souls, and in their dealings with God, somewhat of their dealings with the whole Trinity. I believe spiritual experience is low, because God's people are too carnal and careless, and do not love to aim after more divine converse and fellowship with God; also it is too little brought forth in the ministry of the word. We too often are pleased with convictions—meltings—elevations—enlargements—humblyings—and reformations. The truth is, all this may be where Christ is not to any good purpose in all the thoughts. You and I, are never the better for any of these things, nor for any ordinance, except Christ is revealed to us in the word, and by the Spirit. They are spiritual sights—apprehensions—Revelations, and application, of Christ to us by the Holy Ghost, which only can do us good. It is the Spirit's quickening us by faith in the life—death—burial—resurrection—ascension, and intercession of Christ—which only can heal our wounds—cleanse our consciences, and enable us to approach the throne of grace with boldness and delight. I leave what hath been delivered to your consideration: imploring the Holy Spirit to bless what in it is good and acceptable in his sight, and according to his will. Even so—*Amen.*

# SERMON VII.

## THE BOOK OF LIFE.

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### REVELATION XIII. 8.

*The Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

**T**HIS most sacred book of the *Revelation*, which contains a prophecy of what hath befallen, and is to befall, the Church of Christ in its present militant state, including the whole period of time from our Lord's ascension to his second coming, begins with an account of the time when—the place where—and the person to whom this vision and visionary representation of things was made. It begins with a declaration of the vision which *John* had of Christ, as the High Priest of his people, in the midst of his Churches—who directed and sent seven epistles to the seven Churches in Asia; which represent the state of the Church in each successive period, and contain many prophetic hints respecting the state of the Church in a succession of time, down to the end of it.



It has been entitled, “The History of Christ’s Kingdom,” and in the fourth chapter, we have a representation of the Church universal in all ages set forth, “according to the exact pattern of a Church visible, and instituted, into which all saints on earth should be cast.” The 5th chapter represents Christ taking on him the government and kingdom of the world, and the Church by taking the sealed book, and as God’s commissioner executing the decrees contained in it, and giving the vision of it to his servant John, who informs us that at the instalment of Christ into his office in heaven at his ascension, a song of praise was sung to him as the Lamb slain. The 6th chapter begins the history of Christ’s kingdom, and informs us how Christ, set upon the conquest of Satan’s ministry and worship, and by the preaching of the everlasting Gospel overturned the Romish empire as it was Heathenish—cast Satan out of it, and turns the *Roman Empire*, and emperors of it, Christians, in the space of three hundred years. Though this great change took place, yet seeing the Church of Christ cast over this vast empire had been persecuted solely by the idolatrous inhabitants of it, whilst they remained in their Heathenish state, and after their profession of *Christianity*, had greatly persecuted the true Church of Christ by the Arian heresy, therefore at the prayers of the martyrs, mentioned chap. vi. 10, and in vengeance of their blood, chap. viii. 4, Christ proceeds to ruin the civil imperial power of the *empire* itself, in the 8th and 9th chapters; and the empire

then becoming divided into two, the eastern and the western *empires*, as they are commonly called ;—Christ ruins the *imperial western* state and power in Europe, by the four first trumpets, the wars of the *Goths*, by four several steps in the 8th chapter. Then secondly, he destroys the imperial *Eastern Empire*, which stood after the other by two degrees : first by the *Saracens* ; then by the *Turks*, who are the fifth and sixth trumpets. These are the contents of the 9th chapter. Ere ever these trumpets bring these evils on the empire, Christ seals up a company of 144,000 Christians in the eastern part, as chap. vii. 4. to be preserved and continued in the true profession of his name. I have quoted this briefly from Dr. Goodwin, looking on it as a key to this mystical book. Passing by particulars, let it be sufficient to say, the 10th chapter gives an hint of the reformation of some of the European States from popery. The 11th contains an order to measure the temple of God, and speaks of the slaying of the witnesses—of the whole term of the Beast's reign, which, says Dr. Gill, will probably cease in 1866.—Of the space of time the Church will be in the wilderness—of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and what will follow thereon. The 12th, represents the state of Christ's Church when persecuted by the Roman emperors, and the glorious rest she enjoyed by means of Constantine the Great, who, being a Christian in profession, was a shelter to God's people from their violent enemies :—and this chapter, from whence I have taken my text, gives an account of the *rise, progress, power, and cruelty* of the *Romish Anti-*

*christ*, under the figure of two Beasts; the one representing him in his *civil*, the other in his *ecclesiastical* power. He is suffered to have a blaspheming mouth, and power to continue forty-two months—and he utters blasphemy against God—his *nature*—*tabernacle*—and *Saints*—It is here foretold what power he should have over all the inhabitants of the Roman Empire, and what a defection and falling away there would be from the Gospel and its ordinances—“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” In which words the preservation of Saints from the cursed doctrines and vile abominations of the Church of Rome, is attributed to election-grace, “their names being written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” which book is entitled, *The Book of Life of the Lamb*, either because that in Christ, as the Head of the elect, God hath chosen all his people—or because, as one expresses it, Christ is the prince and author of eternal life, whereunto they are chosen. The Scripture attributes every grace, blessing, and comfort, bestowed by the Lord upon his people, to election, as the grand cause—ocean, fountain and spring, from whence all flows and descends down upon them through the channel of Christ’s most precious *mediation*. *Salvation, effectual calling, faith, sanctification, personal holiness, growth in grace, perseverance, and final glorification in heaven*, are fruits and effects of God’s eternal, everlasting, immutable, invincible love; which as

existent in the fountain God—is beyond all, which the gifts and manifestations of it can express. In opening and explaining the passage before us, I shall endeavour to deliver the doctrine contained in it in the following manner.

First, by considering what is implied, expressed, and contained in the expression and title, “The Book of Life.”

Secondly, why it is called the book of life of the *Lamb*.

Thirdly, in what sense it may be said, the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. And,

Lastly, how we may know our interest in the Lamb slain, and that our names are recorded in the book of life.

I am in the first place to consider what is implied, expressed, and contained, in the expression and title, “The Book of Life.” It is most easily apprehended, and readily acknowledged to be a figurative expression, the Holy Ghost delighting to represent spiritual, heavenly, and eternal things—both the blessings and benefits of them to us under a variety of *images, figures, and metaphors*—that our minds may the more readily conceive, feel, and understand the reality of them, and be more capable of receiving them. Yet this we are to know, the similitudes made use of to represent them to our spiritual view, are but shadows, it is what is shadowed forth by them, hath real being and substance. ‘The *sun* in the firmament, is an instituted emblem in nature, of Christ—He being that to the spiritual, which the former is to the natural world—yet, the former is

but the shadow, it is Christ is the substance, hence he is styled, “*The Sun of Righteousness.*” So also, when Christ is compared to the light—it is his title, “*The true Light.*” As when compared to a vine, it is “*The true Vine*”—when to a stone, he is styled, “*A living Stone*”—when to bread, it is “*The true Bread.*” The bread of life—that bread of God which came down from heaven. I might follow this, but let this be sufficient. The phrase and title, “The Book of Life,” seems to be taken out of the Old Testament, in which we read of some who were written among the living in Jerusalem, and it may denote the following things: the eternal decrees of God—his choosing his elect, and predestinating them to eternal life. Election is an eternal act in the mind and will of God, by which *Christ personal*, and *Christ mystical* were separated in God’s decree for himself, to his own praise and glory. Christ was the object of election, as truly as his bride and spouse—He was elected and chosen to be the Head—and the elect were chosen together with him and in him. God’s election is an election of *persons*. He pitched his love, not on qualifications and graces, but on persons; therefore, so long as the persons remain, God’s love remains immutably the same, and he works that in the persons of the elect which makes them comely, through his comeliness put *upon them*. —Eternal—personal and unconditional election, is owing to the good pleasure of *Jehovah’s* will—is the fruit of his everlasting love—and is to the praise of the glory of his grace. God loved his chosen ones, before they had done either good or evil, Rom. ix. 11;

and by an eternal act and purpose within himself, predestinated them to the *adoption of children*, making them heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. This will be evident by consulting the first chapter of the Ephesians, where election—adoption—and acceptation of the persons of the elect, in the person to *Christ*, the *beloved*, are spoken of as immanent acts, in the mind and will of God, before the foundation of the world; and flowing from God's sovereign good-will and pleasure; and these acts of grace are irrevocable and immutable.

Election is spoken of under the expression of writing the names of the elect in the book of life, which is expressive of the exact knowledge that God has of all the elect—his value for them, his particular remembrance of them, and his love to them.—Also it evidences that this election is of particular persons by name, that it is sure and certain; for those whose names are written in the book of life, shall never be blotted out, they will always remain in the number of God's elect, and be everlastingly *precious* in his sight. When the Lord spoke to his great favourite *Moses*, he said, “Thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by *name*.” And when the seventy disciples returned to Christ with joy, saying, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name”—He said—“Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”—Which shews, that God's election to eternal life, is of particular *persons*—of persons by name, and that it is sure, certain, and immutable. Election is of itself, an incomprehensible mystery and act of grace. God chose the

elect for himself, and says of them ; “ This people have I formed for myself ”—and his ultimate design in it, is, and was, to ordain the elect unto a super-creation-union with himself—and an immediate communion with them, by blessing them with an immediate communication of himself in love—grace—and mercy—by Jesus Christ, the *everlasting foundation, Corner-stone, Head, and Mediator* of union between God and them. Election in Christ, gave *being* to the elect ; and virtual representative existence in Him they had from everlasting. Being chosen in him they were united unto him, and this is the high comprehending union, as one calls it, whereby the elect were chosen in Christ to absolute, glorious, and unspotted holiness, Ephes. i. 4, 5. In him they were blessed with all spiritual blessings—grace was given them in Christ before the world began, 2 Tim. i. 9 ; and God, who cannot lie, gave them, in Christ, the promise of eternal life, before the world began. Hence saith *Paul* to *Titus*, first chapter, verse the second—“ In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” This promise of eternal life, was given to Christ, and made to him as the representative of the elect—He received it with all the grants of grace for them, and Paul gives us a glorious view and an account of it in the following words—“ Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.” In the thoughts—councils—decrees, and purposes of God, all things were

established and settled respecting the elect before all time, and every thing which was to befall them, and to take place in them, was fore-appointed. Each, and all of them, was and were as particularly regarded, as though everlasting love was singly to be vented in each, and upon each, wholly and only. Hence the Lord says—"I have loved *thee*, with an everlasting love." He speaks thus singly and personally to each, as well as to the whole lump and body of them. And it may be drawn into an use for comfort and encouragement by any Saint, at any time, and under any peculiar circumstance, that God loves one individual with the love, the whole love of his heart; yea, with the same love for the nature, kind, and degree of it, with which he loves Christ, the Head and Mediator; nor will he cease to love, for his love is one pure, entire, everlasting act—from everlasting to everlasting, borne to the persons of his people, He having chosen them in Christ, and by his own grace, gives them thereby *subsistence, being, and life* in Christ. Hence the Apostle saith—"Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; 1 Cor. i. 30. so that they cannot cease to be the objects of his delight, and complacency, because they are one with Christ, and stand in him complete, and are presented in him and by him, "holy, unblameable, and irreprovable in his sight." Their names written in the book of life, is a proof of the great security of their persons, and eternal state, and of the peculiar delight, care, and attention, of the Lord towards them; and



as Christ is the root, and the elect are branches; so they receive their life from Christ, as they are in him, and supported by him. God ordained Christ, as God-man for himself—the elect for Christ, and the world for them, and appointed all things which should befall his people agreeably to his *election-grace*. Hence saith Paul, “All things are yours—and ye are Christ’s—and Christ is God’s.” 1 Cor. iii. 21—23. This brings me to consider, secondly, Why it is styled, “*The Book of Life of the Lamb* ;” and it is so called, because the Lamb’s name is first upon it, and stands first in it ; after which follows an enrolment of all the particular names of all the elect. The name of the *Lamb*, which was wrote from eternity in the book of life, leads us to consider that Christ, as God-man, Mediator, was not the cause of election—he being, as such, the object of election, as much as we ; and every part of his work, each and all of his mediatory acts and offices were owing to predestination, and the fruit of divine appointment. He is styled elect, by Jehovah, the Father, in the 42d of Isaiah. “Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.” To clear this, let it be observed ; that the Second Person, in the incomprehensible Essence, should subsist in an human nature, comes within the compass of divine decrees, which was the fruit of the federal transactions of the Three Persons in God. Jesus Christ, as God-man, and Mediator, had no influence in our *election*, he did not choose so much as one man : it was God that elected all those that are elected. “Thine they were (says our Christ to his

Father) and thou gavest them me." God did pre-ordain Christ to be the immaculate Lamb, before the foundation of the world, and all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, were then divinely appointed ; all therefore, which Christ did, is comprehended in one word, doing the will of God. " I come to do thy will, O God." Heb. x. 7. To sum it up, Christ is the glorious Mediator of union—reconciliation, and communication ; and all is of, and by the Father's will, call, appointment, and consecration : hence we read in the Scriptures of his divine call, solemn investiture and union, when, in the ancient eternal council of the Incomprehensible Three, he was set up in his office, character, and capacity, and introduced into his sacred offices. He was present with the Father before all worlds—was at the making the book of life—he himself stands first in it as the elect of God, and the Head of all the elect, who were chosen in him—and together with him—and he is the author and giver of that life, which they are chosen unto, both here and hereafter. It may also lead us to consider, that a provision was made by the Eternal Trinity, for preserving the elect, from eternal death and damnation, by the eternal consecration of Christ into, and setting him apart to execute the office of Priesthood, which implies, and necessarily involves God's decree, concerning the fall ; the title, "*The Lamb*," being always expressive of Christ, as the priest and sacrifice of his people ; by whose federal engagements with his eternal Father, on their behalf, they were preserved from the imputation of sin to their persons, though

not from the guilt, stain, and defilement of it ; to wash and cleanse them from which, the *Lamb* was slain, and by his wounds, stripes, and blood—He, by virtue of the mystical union between him and his Church, hath washed away the stains, obliterated the guilt, abolished the sins of his redeemed out of the sight of *law* and *justice*, and from before the Lord, and that for ever. Hence Paul says—“ *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.*” And John says—“ *The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin.*” And Christ himself saith to his Church, “ *Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee.*” This title, *The Lamb*, which is in this book of the Revelation, given almost thirty times to our precious Mediator, is, when spiritually attended to, and considered, exceedingly sweet and encouraging. We may safely say, that Christ hath worn this name ever since he entered as our High Priest, into the holiest of all, to express his pity, tenderness, and meekness, towards his beloved people. His heart is now in heaven, what it was upon the cross—He is still Jesus the Saviour ;—the honour and majesty put upon him—the crown he wears—the place he fills—the office he sustains in heaven, are all motives to him to do us good, and to remember us with everlasting kindness. When he was made sin and a curse for us, the joy set before him, which was, the sitting at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, and of seeing his seed, the travail of his soul, who were to be plucked as brands from the burning, and planted and placed as stars in the fir-

moment of his glory, and shine as so many jewels in his mediatory crown, caused him to endure the cross, and despise the shame. And, now he is exceedingly glorious, clothed with majesty and honour, he will rather love his people better than on the cross. This I may say, Our Lord when risen from the dead, spoke not a word concerning his sorrows and sufferings—but sin, being finished by his sacrifice, and an everlasting righteousness brought in, he speaks of glory, and of what benefit his being taken up into heaven would be unto his people—“Go (says he) to *Mary*, and tell my brethren, *I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.*” He wears the memorials of his sufferings in his glorified humanity, appearing in a vesture dipped in blood—as the Lamb newly slain—with the wounds, or rather with marks, which the pins of iron, which nailed him to the cross, and the soldier’s spear, made in him. I proceed—Thirdly, to consider in what sense it may be said the *Lamb* was *slain* from the foundation of the world. It may be, as his death was ordained by God—decreed and enacted in heaven—resolved on before time, though done in the fulness of time:—therefore Christ may be called the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world, determinately, in the council and decree of God—promissorily, in the promise and word of God, passed to *Adam* after the fall—typically, in the sacrifices which were settled immediately upon the revelation made of the Redeemer—also efficaciously, as the virtue of Christ’s death, and the efficacy of his sacrifice, were applied by the Lord to all his believing people,

before his actual sufferings. That Christ, as the Lamb of God, was appointed and prepared from eternity, appears from what Peter, in his first epistle, declares—who, speaking of redemption by the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish, and without spot, says—“Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world.” God, by an eternal purpose in Christ, decreed that, without the shedding of his most precious blood, there should be no remission of sin. The death of Christ, was a grand article in the eternal compact between the Father and the Son; it was from eternity decreed by God, embraced by Christ, published in Scripture, as it was ordained in heaven, and set out in the manifesto of the Old Testament. “Christ, as one expresses himself, was ordained to be put into the state and condition of a sinner in our stead, not into the practical and experimental state of sin, but the penal state of a sinner, to be a sacrifice for it, not to be polluted with it. His death, as a sacrifice, was his intention in the assumption of our nature—the prophecies predicted it—the types represented it—this he pursued, and for this he thirsted.” Christ is often called a Lamb, in reference to the lambs of the daily sacrifices, which were types of him, in allusion to which, John cried, “Behold the Lamb of God,” the true substance and antitype of them. Also, he is styled the Lamb of God, being of his preparing—and a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, not only in the decree concerning him, but in the type of him, the first sacrifice mentioned in the Scripture being a Lamb. See Gen. iv. 2. 4.

Christ was proposed in the first revelation of grace—therein represented as a suffering Saviour—an atoning Mediator—who was to bruise Satan by suffering in the human nature, assumed by him, the punishment due to sin. The instituted sacrifices, which accompanied his divine revelation, and served to set forth Christ, were sacred memorials of his sufferings—sorrows—agonies—blood-shedding—sacrifice—and death. The book of Psalms, and several other parts of the prophetic writings, were, and served as a divine explanation and comment to clear up the types and figures of the slaughtered Lamb, as set forth under that dispensation. The transferring of sin from the persons of the elect to the person of Christ, was shadowed forth in every sacrifice; they being all substituted in the room of sinners—offered for sin—and the sins of the offerers were laid upon them in a typical way and manner. The curse, and fire of divine wrath, which was to fall upon Christ, when he should have the sins of his people laid upon him, and when borne by him in his own body on the tree—was set forth by the fire which lighted upon, and consumed the sacrifices under the law. And, the inconceivable sorrows which would invade the Mediator's soul; as also, the peculiar sufferings he was to endure in his body, were all foretold in the writings of the Prophets, and are set forth as being all in the decree of God; yea, they are spoken of, as though past already, to point out the reality, virtue, and efficacy of them; and that they were then as effectual, by virtue of the everlasting covenant, and upon the footing of the engage-

ments of the Eternal Three, and the ancient settlements of grace, as they are now they have been all sustained and endured. Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, as he stood solemnly engaged with his Father, to put away the sins of his people by the sacrifice of himself—and also, as he was set forth as the Lamb slain, in promises, types, and predictions, to the Patriarchs—Prophets and Church of the living God—under the Patriarchal and Levitical dispensation—which made known the virtue of his blood unto them, saying, “Look unto me and be ye saved.” This title, the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World, is also expressive of the everlasting virtue—efficacy—worth and value of Christ, as the Lamb of God, who, ever since the fall, has been made known to his Church, as the living Redeemer and Mediator of it—and as taking away sin from off the persons of his people, from the morning even to the evening of the world. The *Baptist* cried concerning him—“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” By which, the continued virtue of Christ’s sacrifice to take away sin, and the constant efficacy of his blood to cleanse from it, and the daily applications of it to the consciences of believers by the Spirit of God, are declared. Christ was the Lamb slain from the beginning of, or from the foundation of the world, in regard of the efficacy and mystical sprinkling of his blood upon those that lived at the beginning, as well as those that shall live at the end of the world. And here we may justly admire the costly train and continuance of the oblations and

sacrifices before the coming of Christ, as memento's of the purity—excellency—worth—and dignity of the sacrifice of himself. To use the beautiful words of one—"As mathematicians measure the greatness of the stars, which are above their reach, by the shadows of the earth which are within their compass; so did Old Testament believers, upon the view of those sacrifices which were shadows, apprehend the virtue and efficacy of the grand oblation of the soul and body of Christ, offered up in union with his divine person, from whence it received its virtue, which rendered it of infinite worth, and gave it an everlasting efficacy." Once in the end of the world, Christ appeared, and the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all—He, by bearing them, and as sustaining the whole curse and punishment due unto them, "*finished the transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.*" He is now the Lamb slain, and appears in heaven as the *Lord our righteousness*, and everlasting High Priest, to bestow upon his people all the blessings of his eternal redemption. The whole Host of the Redeemed, worship him as the Lamb of God, and praise him for his most precious blood-shedding. By virtue of his personal appearing in the presence of God for us, the value of his sacrifice and death are, as it were, kept up in remembrance in heaven; and as Jehovah the Father, before the incarnation, testified of Jesus, and his infinite delight and complacency in the fore-views he had of the sacrifice of Jesus, so ever since our Lord's exaltation, the Father hath been engaged



in setting him forth in the *everlasting Gospel*, as a *propitiation*; and it is impossible for any of us to honour God more than by receiving his testimony concerning his Son, and sealing it with our *Amen*, subscribing to the eternal truth contained in it. This brings me,

Lastly, to consider how we may know our interest in the Lamb slain, and that our names are recorded in the book of life. To every soul taught of God, and brought to feel inward sin, and perceive inward filth, guilt, and corruption; a knowledge of Christ and personal interest in him, is of eternal moment in the thoughts and views of such. But, it is much to be lamented that, most of the Lord's dear people, after they are savingly wrought upon, inwardly and spiritually, either live in doubts about their interest in Jesus, or take up with marks and signs of Christ within them, to the neglect of his person—work—and offices—with his Father's *record* and *testimony* concerning him. I take it, that the Scripture is exceeding clear concerning this great point, how it may be known that we have interest in the Lamb, and that the knowledge and discovery is made in such a way and manner as this: the Holy Spirit, who is the glorifier of Jesus, takes of the things of Christ, and makes them known.—He has made a clear—full—and perfect revelation of Christ in the word of the Gospel, which, like a glass, (unto which Paul compares it) reflects the image, splendour and glory of the Lord—as it shews us the glories of his transcendent person—fitness—fulness—and suitableness—the excelling splendour of his most perfect righte-

ousness—the consummate purity and efficacy of his blood—the high honour God the Father hath bestowed on Jesus—and the high delight, complacency, and satisfaction, which he hath taken, and will for ever take, in the person and work of his co-equal Son. By which means, we, from the word, by the Spirit, are led to a spiritual knowledge of Christ, as thus revealed and set forth by God the Father unto us, and have a knowledge of Christ agreeably to the account given of him in the sacred word. Or, you may take my meaning thus—Christ is conceived in our thoughts, and formed in our minds by the word, through which the Holy Ghost is pleased to create in us proper thoughts of Christ, and real spiritual conceptions of him, truly agreeable to the written word; and by these means we are led to such spiritual sights and views of him as enlarge our hearts—quicken our souls—make him precious to us—and bring us to believe in him, to rest upon him—to desire to be found in him, not having on our own righteousness, but his. Christ first apprehends us, before we apprehend him; we must know him, before we can exercise faith upon him, and every act of faith, put forth by us, and drawn forth from us by the Spirit of the Lord, will be always agreeable to our knowledge of Christ. For as faith is an act of the understanding; so it will be exactly commensurate to what we know of Jesus. The spiritual understanding, enlightened to know Christ, will influence the will, which always follows the understanding to choose Christ—and the heart to love, receive, and embrace him, as the only beloved of our

souls. There must be a clear apprehension of the atonement—obedience—love—and person of Immanuel, before there can be any acts of faith exercised towards and upon him. And, as I conceive, there may be grace in the soul, where there has not yet been any distinct act of faith put forth towards our Lord Jesus Christ. I consider personal interest in Christ, as the fruit of eternal election, and that as the Son of God covenanted and engaged for all those which the Father gave him ; so he draws them effectually into divine fellowship with him by the influences of the Holy Spirit working in and upon them. The generality of God's professing ones, pore too much upon themselves—their inward graces and fruits of sanctification, to the real neglect of Christ and his salvation. Many also, I think, make a mistake in supposing all their faith is to be exercised upon their interest in Christ ; whereas, it is not my knowledge of personal interest in the Redeemer is the object of my faith, or the support of it, it is but the effect of it. To say Christ loved me, and gave himself for *me*, is faith grown to its maturity and perfection. I do not find, in my own experience, my faith strengthened by believing my interest in Christ, but I find it strengthened as Christ the object is kept in view. As faith deals immediately with the person, righteousness and blood of Christ—and views the eternal worth of the work of Jesus—and considers this Apostle and High Priest of our profession, it rejoices in him and his great salvation, which it embraces as its own. I find, in my own soul, that it is what I believe of, and concerning Jesus, strength-

ens my faith in him, and that my best moments are, when I am swallowed up in the contemplations of him. It is what he is as Jesus—an *Almighty*—All-sufficient Saviour, that supports my soul; not my views of interest in him, but viewing him as full of grace and truth—as every way infinitely exceeding all my sin and misery—and the redeeming virtue and efficacy of his blood cleansing from all sin. Under these views, I can approach, with all my inward guilt and filth, to the fountain of eternal purity, opened for sin and uncleanness. Such then as value Christ—as think highly and honourably of him—who believe by the power of the Holy Spirit, the infinite virtue of Christ's blood, and trust in it, for all their cleansing from every spot and stain of sin before the Lord, have reason to conclude they have interest in the slain Lamb, and that their names are recorded in the book of life. If you delight to meditate upon the Father's love in election; upon the Son's love in redemption, and have your daily converse with Christ, by faith and spiritual meditation, there cannot be a better evidence of your interest in Christ, and of your names being written in heaven. If any, who desire to love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, are groaning for redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins, and are mourning without the Sun—let me exhort such, to study the perfect work of God—Jesus—and the infinite sufficiency and everlasting efficacy of it, to save them from all their sins, and from all their miseries—to take into view the divine

record of God concerning Christ, and consider if it is not a sufficient warrant for believing.

And what has been delivered, may the Lord of all Lords bless the same, as far as it contains his truth, and will make for his glory. *Amen.*

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## SERMON VIII.

THE OBJECT AND ACTS OF FAITH.

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JOHN III. 18.

*He that believeth on Him, is not condemned.*

WE have in this chapter, from whence I have selected the words read for my text, an account of a discourse which passed between our Lord and Nicodemus, a Ruler, or one of the Jewish Sanhedrim, or Great Council : who, though a great man, a person of eminence and authority, yet, from what our divine Saviour had wrought of a miraculous sort at the feast of the Passover, and also, from what he had taught the people, who were present at that grand festival, was convinced that Christ was a teacher come from God, and wrought his miracles by the power of

God ; and addresses him in the following most respectful manner——“ Rabbi, (or Master) we know that thou art a teacher come from God ; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.” Our Lord immediately preaches unto him the absolute necessity of being born again, to the end he might be capable of perceiving the things of God, and of receiving and enjoying divine and heavenly blessings. “ Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” The new-birth is absolutely necessary, to the intent that we may know we are the saved of the Lord. It is not necessary that we may be saved, as though we could not be saved without it, nor be interested in Christ but by it. No, this is not our Lord’s doctrine. But it is necessary that we may know our interest in salvation-work. Union to, and interest in, Christ, is founded upon the everlasting love of Father, Son, and Spirit. Being in Christ, is the basis of all God’s acts of grace in salvation and sanctification towards and upon us ; because Christ and his Church were one from everlasting—he engaged upon the foreviews of the fall, in an everlasting covenant on their behalf—for their sakes he became incarnate, obeyed, and bore their sins in his own body on the tree—sustained the *curse* due to their crimes, and obtained for them eternal redemption. And he sends down into the hearts of all the elect in his due time, the Holy Spirit, as the Lord and giver of spiritual life, whose divine and spiritual

operations are the immediate spring, life, and source, of our new-birth, and every faculty of the new-man, of every spiritual and supernatural act of life, evidenced and drawn forth in the exercises of faith, and in communion with the Lord ; so that the Apostle John saith, “ Whosoever believeth, that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.” For believing is the manifestation of the new-birth, and the infallible evidence of it. So then regeneration, or being born of the Spirit, is the fruit of secret union to Christ, and the open manifestation of it. Election is the original and fundamental of all grace and glory ; all that flows from it was contained in that act. Regeneration is the first blessing which takes place in and upon us ; it is the first in execution, and by it we are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light. For by the divine and supernatural influence of the Holy Ghost within and upon the redeemed of the Lord, their souls are quickened with spiritual life, their minds enlightened with heavenly and divine light, their hearts drawn to believe on Christ, to receive him, to feed on him—and to follow and cleave steadfastly unto him as their ALL IN ALL.

Nicodemus marvels at the doctrine, which makes way for our Lord to insist further upon it, by opening and declaring the Eternal Spirit to be the author of it, who performs it by his own sovereign grace, in an imperceptible and mysterious manner ; so that how it is wrought cannot be described, the effects of it only are visible and discernible. All which seems

to increase the admiration and surprise of the man, who cries out—"How can these things be? Upon which our Lord seems to reprove him for his ignorance of this truth, which was so fully stated and clearly taught in the Scriptures of the Prophets, "Art thou a Master in Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, (as the doctrine of regeneration was, in comparison with some of the more sublime truths and mysteries of grace) and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" From hence he declares his divine fitness to open the deep things of God, and teach the true knowledge of the Holy One. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." He being God-man, had been himself admitted into all the councils of the Trinity, and having by the assumption of the human nature, personal subsistence in the Son of God, he was from everlasting in heaven; being set up in personal union in the Son of God; and according to covenant-settlements, came down from heaven by his incarnation and manifestation in the flesh, and was in heaven as to his secret being one with the only-begotten Son of God, even while he appeared on earth in the form of a servant. Our Lord proceeds to set forth the great subject of redemption by his death and passion, in its procuring, and in its efficient cause, and then speaks of the means whereby it is apprehended, received, and en-



joyed by us. He sets forth his sufferings and death, with the glorious design and fruits of them thus—  
“And as Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life.” The Serpent lifted up by God’s command in the Wilderness of Arabia, and appointed by him as a means of healing the stung Israelites, was a figure, symbol, and type of Christ, as lifted up upon the cross, as made a curse for his people; who, by being made sin and a curse for them, hath saved them from the imputation of all their sin, guilt, and pollution, and by being made a curse for them, hath redeemed them from the curse of the law. By faith in whose everlasting efficacious wounds and stripes, we experience healing and cure, from the venom of sin, and wounds of conscience, and find eternal life to be in him. The grand fountain from whence all this proceeds, is the love of God. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Our Lord expresses this love in a way to excite our amazement—*God so loved*. Who can conceive what is contained in, *God so loved* the world! neither Angel, or Saint, either on earth or in heaven, can sound the infinity of it! *So loved!* as if Christ, God-man, could not express the greatness and immensity of it! but sets before us the fruits and effects of it. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.” A greater gift he could not bestow, though an equal gift he hath bestowed; I

mean the Holy Spirit, who is given, and sent from the Father, in the name, and as the fruit of Christ's mediation, to reveal Christ to us, and in us, as our hope of glory, and to shed abroad in the hearts of his believing Saints, the love of God. The word, world, is not without its meaning here. And though it be everlasting verity to affirm that—God loved the elect world, and gave his Son to save them, yet I conceive this word, *world*, here before us, is designed to point out that sinners in this present evil world, encompassed about with sins, miseries, temptations, and enemies, Christ came to save; God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned. In treating these words, I will endeavour to divide and consider them thus:—by observing, in the

First place, that Christ is the immediate object of our faith, which is implied in these words before us, *believeth on Him*.

Secondly, that faith in its acts and exercises, is directed to, and is distinctly, and immediately to be exercised upon Christ, as a Saviour, and what its peculiar objects and acts are. And, in the

Third, and last place, will shew the blessed state true believers are in, *He that believeth on him, is not condemned*: which implies that such as are in a state of unbelief, and die in it are, and will be finally

condemned. In pursuance with the design and plan drawn up and given—I begin, in the

First place, to observe, that Christ is the immediate object of our faith, which is implied in these words of our text here before us, *he that believeth on him*, which points out Christ to be the object, and faith to be the spiritual act of the renewed mind upon, and towards him, as the object and subject on which its acts are exercised, and on whom they terminate. We are then here confined to the Saviour, and his salvation, as revealed in the word of the Gospel, and testified of by the Holy Spirit, who has most gloriously exalted, extolled, and highly magnified Christ throughout the inspired writings, as the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the *ending*, the *first* and the *last* in our salvation. And it is good ; yea, it is absolutely necessary, when engaged in this subject, to consider Christ in the very foundation, constitution, and appointment, of his mediatorial office. He, as the Christ of God, as his salvation to the ends of the earth, received his call, office, and work, by the will, appointment, and call of Jehovah the Father, who said unto him, “Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.” Heb. v. 5, 6. The Eternal Federal Acts and Transactions of the Co-equal Three, in the Self-existent Essence, are the original of the covenant of redemption, and upon these eternal engagements which then took place between the Father and the Son, of which the Holy Ghost was wit-

ness, the office of Christ, as the sinner's surety, righteousness and sacrifice, was founded and raised, ratified and established; which arose from the everlasting love of God the Father, as the fountain-cause. Hence, in the Scripture, salvation, as to its original, is always ascribed to God the Father, as in Heb. ii. 10, "For it became him (which is a periphrasis of the Father) for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings—also, in 2 Cor. v. 19. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." And this same truth arises out of, and is most clearly contained, set forth, and expressed in the context before the Scripture, which is laid as the foundation of our present sermon, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son." The elect are here considered in their lapsed state, as fallen, corrupted, and defiled with sin. The love of God breaks forth upon and towards them in their low estate; and he, having loved them before time, so loves them in time, as to give his only-begotten Son to take hold of their nature.—And, he so loved them, as to give his only-begotten Son in their nature, to bear their sins, and to carry their sorrows, to this very end, and with this very design, that, "whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." What free, sovereign grace is expressed in these words! "*That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish!*" *Whosoever*, it is a taking in all sorts and

kinds of sinners ; none are exempted, none are prohibited. Thus freely does the language of grace utter the mind and will of God ; so that we may boldly say, God's very heart is engaged in salvation-work, he delights to save sinners in and by his Son, and utters himself so clearly upon this matter in the word, that nothing can be more effectual to remove all doubts, guilt, fear, and distress, from the minds of sinners, when it pleases him to apply his word and bring it home to the heart, by his holy and blessed Spirit. God's decree concerning Christ, that he should be the Lamb slain by the sword of vindictive wrath—the incarnation of Christ, which, when it took place, might justly be styled, *The acceptable Year of the Lord*—the life, sufferings, and death of Jesus—his burial, resurrection, ascension, intercession, and advocacy in heaven—his everlasting Gospel ; in the preaching of which the everlasting efficacy of his most precious blood-shedding, is evidenced and declared, is a continued and full proof, that, *the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world*. Which great end and glorious design our Lord himself seals with his own testimony. “ For God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world ; but that the world through him might be saved.” Stupendous grace ! how incomprehensible the *love* ! how infinite the *mercy* ! how vast the *design* ! God in Christ, and God with Christ, engaged by an everlasting act of stipulation ; and carrying that act into full *execution*, to save elect sinners in the Lord Redeemer, and by him, and through his

mediation, obedience, and oblation, with an everlasting salvation. Which salvation, is the grand subject of the everlasting Gospel ; which is styled, *The Gospel of Salvation*, which reveals Christ in his essential, personal, and mediatorial glories ; and sets forth the riches, the unsearchable riches of his mediatorial grace, in which we by faith behold him in all the love of his heart, as cloathed with bowels of mercy, and infinite compassion ; having a robe of everlasting righteousness to present us in, complete before the throne, and as having shed his life's blood to cleanse, heal, purify, and wash our souls from their sins, stains, guilt, and wounds. Now Christ, as represented in the Gospel, is the object ; yea, the immediate object of our faith, which will appear as we consider that Christ is he, by whom all the councils of redemption were executed. It was he who assumed our nature, obeyed and suffered in it to magnify the law ; satisfied divine justice, and was raised again in it, to intercede for us before the throne ; by which, the value and infinite perfection of his personal obedience and oblation are made manifest. It is *by him we believe in God*. Faith is called, *the faith of Christ*, Gal. ii. 16 ; it is also called, *a coming to God by Christ*, Heb. vii. 25, xi. 6 ; and the Prophet Isaiah, proclaims Christ to be the immediate object of faith in these words, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." It is in Christ only we can find all things suitable to us, and necessary for us. In him there is a righteousness to cover us, a fountain to cleanse us ; he is a Physician to heal us, an High Priest to inter-

cede for us, and an Advocate to plead our cause.— An ever-living and everlasting friend in the court of heaven, who appears in the presence of God for us, and remembers us with everlasting kindness. And this may receive confirmation by reminding you, that the promise of Christ, and the exhibition of him in the first declaration of grace, immediately upon the fall, was the one only foundation of the first faith, which was ever exercised in the world after man became a sinner. Christ's incarnation, he being called *the seed of the woman* ; also his sufferings, in the *bruising of his heel* by the Serpent, was made known to Adam in Paradise, Gen iii. 15 ; which revelation, was the grand original from whence all the faith of the Patriarchs sprung, on which it was founded, and where it centered ; for though it pleased the Lord to add promise to promise, yet they only served to set forth and explain what was contained in the first original:—which was a copy transcribed from the record which the *Eternal Three* bare in heaven, by their covenant offices in the economy of salvation, which they engaged in, and entered upon the execution of, immediately after the fall, on the behalf of the elect.

Christ is the object of faith as God-man, Mediator—as the author of eternal salvation—as the everlasting righteousness and propitiation for sin and sinners. He was crucified, made sin, sustained the curse and wrath of his Father, in the law-place, room, and stead of sinners ; and is to be preached unto them in all the fulness of his grace, with all the completeness of his salvation ; with all the triumphs of

his death, with all the conquests he hath made over sin, wrath, Satan, death, and hell; together with the full and complete healing, peace, and pardon, which are the fruits and effects of his wounds and blood; and all this is to be set forth to *sinner*s, as *sinner*s, as appears from the words of Paul—“*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*” And Christ as crucified, is the immediate object of faith; hence saith the Apostle, “I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” 1 Cor. ii. 2. Though the whole of Christ was the grand subject of Paul’s study; yet the death of Christ being the marrow of the Gospel, was his chiefest; because here was the antidote for sin; the remedy for sinners; the healing balsam for their wounds, flowed from the wounded soul and body of Christ, who was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and by whose stripes we are healed. Christ is revealed in the Gospel, and preached and made known by it, that such as are stung and wounded by sin, Satan, law, and conscience, may look on him and be healed. Yea, there is every thing in Christ to suit the sinner’s case, to assuage his griefs, to ease him of his burdens, to comfort and refresh his heart, and encourage his hope in the Lord. All the everlasting love, grace, and mercy of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, with all their communicable blessings, as contained and treasured up, expressed and conveyed to us in and from the everlasting covenant, are all given and freely bestowed upon us in the fulness of Christ Jesus, who is head over all things to the Church, which is his body,



the fulness of him that filleth ALL in ALL. So that it may, I conceive, clearly appear from what hath been delivered, that Christ, as the Christ of God, in his person as God-man—Immanuel—the Lord our Righteousness—the propitiation for sin—the healer and intercessor for transgressors—is the immediate object of our faith—whom sinners are immediately to treat with, and believe in and on, for life and salvation, purity and pardon ; which may receive further confirmation by considering, that the death of Christ for sinners, in their law-place, room and stead, is the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel. Paul's method and order of preaching was thus—I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, viz. first, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. Which brings me to my second particular, in which I proposed to consider, that faith, in its acts and exercises, is directed to, and is distinctly and immediately to be exercised upon Christ, as a Saviour, and what its particular objects and acts are. This truth might easily be proved by a quotation of divers express passages from Scripture, that faith, in its acts and exercises, is directed to, and is distinctly, and immediately to be exercised upon Christ, as a Saviour. When the Jailer cried out to *Paul* and *Silas*—"Sirs! What must I do to be saved?" the reply was, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" Acts xvi. 31. The Apostle informs us, Rom. x. 10, that it is "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The words of our divine Lord, which were before men-

tioned, confirm this point ; they prove that faith in its acts and exercises, is to be immediately directed to and exercised upon himself as a Saviour—"As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up :—that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, not for the healed to look upon, but the stung and wounded : so Christ was lifted up upon the Cross for the healing of poor sinners, and was in his death the healer ; hence saith the Prophet, "*With his stripes we are healed.*"—He is set forth in the Gospel as the anti-typical Brazen Serpent, to whom sinners are directed to look, on whom the eye of faith is to be fixed, until we find virtue proceeding from him, the object of our faith, to heal and cleanse our souls effectually from all our sins, guilt, pollutions, wounds, and stains.

Faith is a spiritual knowledge and perception of Christ, and the Scriptures do not treat so much of the principal and nature of it, as of the acts of it. The Holy Spirit is the author of it, the word is the ground of it, Christ is the object of it, on him it fixes, rests, and in him it triumphs.

The Holy Spirit by his own immediate divine influences and operations on our minds, is most graciously pleased to enlighten us, and to reveal Christ as set forth before us in the word ; he makes known the salvation of Jesus to us ; he opens the heart to receive, embrace, and believe on him, and draws forth that faith, which is of his own operation, into act and exercise upon the Holy and immaculate

Lamb; and thus we are divinely drawn to believe on Christ for everlasting life; by which means we know that we are one with Christ, being in *Him who is holy and true*. In the method and order of the Spirit's work in and upon the elect, he first produces a divine birth, a spiritual regeneration, making them partakers of the divine nature, which is the foundation of all grace within them; then he proceeds to enlighten their renewed minds with the knowledge of Christ; then he produceth and draws forth from their minds an act of faith towards and upon the Lord Jesus; and, as the glorifier of Jesus, he goes on to open their understandings gradually, to know more and more of the mediatorial glories, offices, grace, fulness, and unsearchable riches, of the God-man; and also to know, by his divine unction, that they are *in him that is true*, even in *the Son of God, Jesus Christ*. By which divine light and teaching, they find they arrive to some degree of steadfastness in their most holy faith, and to a confidence in the Lord Jesus, as their head, husband, salvation, and mediator—their portion—joy—and crown and glory. But, in connection with my proposal, I would consider what the particular objects of faith are, and what particular acts are put forth towards and exercised on the peculiar objects of it. It is indeed justly said by one now with God, that “Christ crucified is the best subject for sinners, as Christ exalted is for Saints.” It is by the everlasting Gospel, that Christ, and his free, full, complete, and all-sufficient salvation is made known. In the preaching of it, the Holy Ghost is given. Who, being sent

from the Father in the name, and mediation of Christ Jesus, opens the understanding of quickened sinners to apprehend who Christ is, and what he hath done and suffered, *The just for the unjust to bring us to God.* Christ, and the whole of Christ, is the object of faith; and Christ, under various considerations, is set forth for faith to be exercised towards and upon; particularly his propitiation, blood, and obedience, are set forth in the word as the objects of faith. Paul says of himself and others, *we preach Christ crucified.* And as they preached, and according to their preaching, so the hearers were to believe, and so we are to believe, see 1 Cor. xv. 11. The same Apostle, when addressing himself to the Galatians, says, “Before whose eyes, Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, as crucified among you!” Consequently they were to take in by faith, those views of him, suitable and agreeable to the representation made of him in the word and ordinances. Christ, in his propitiatory work of oblation, is one of the peculiar objects of faith, on which it is most divinely exercised. Hence the Apostle informs us, Rom. iii. 25, that “God hath set forth Christ, to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood.” Faith eyes the blood of Christ, as the only propitiation for sin; takes in from the word, and through the teachings of the Holy Spirit, what is written and declared in the Scripture concerning its value, worth, efficacy and virtue; receives the testimony of the Father, in which he declares, that *the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth from all sin:* and, because faith hath

for its immediate relief, the propitiation, or bloodshedding of Christ, we read of justification by his blood, Rom. v. 9, not only to denote, that by the death of Christ our whole salvation was completed, that being the last act which belonged to Christ's mediation, as it was to be performed here below; but to express also, how faith hath the death of Christ, the Surety and Saviour, for its proper and peculiar object and support. The *righteousness* of Christ, is also the object of faith; hence Peter writes thus—"To them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. i. 1. The learned tell us, The words should have been translated, *in*, or, *on*, *the righteousness of God*, &c. so pointing out, *the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*, to be the object of faith.

This place, quoted from Peter, describeth the faith, the peculiar faith of all true believers, which faith was founded upon the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. And also, Christ as *risen and exalted* is the object of faith, for if God, as raising Christ from the dead, is the object of faith, then Christ, as raised by God, is the object of faith also. Hence we read those words in Rom. iv. 24, 25. "If we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." As Christ bore our sins, and made an end of them by his death; so in his resurrection as the common head, and representative of his people, he was freely justified and

solemnly acquitted. To his death we owe our deliverance from the imputation of sin, and from wrath to come, and to his glorious resurrection we owe our title to, and investiture with eternal life and glory. Christ, as *authorized by God, and invested by him* with full power and authority to save to the uttermost, all that come unto the Father by him, is the object of faith. There is little comfort to be found in all that Christ did and suffered, unless we respect him as one sent by his Father. It is this fastens our faith on him, and fills our souls with a confidence in him. “This is,” says the renowned Charnock, “the magnifying *emphasis* he himself sets upon his disciples’ faith, in his solemn pleas in heaven, if we may judge of them by the pattern of them he gave us on earth, John xvii. 8. *They have believed that thou didst send me.*” Christ, as *sent*, is the object of faith, since the love of God in sending Christ, is urged as the encouragement of faith, John iii. 16. And the *person of Christ*, is the object of faith.—Christ must be believed in, as God gives him—God gives his person first, and then his benefits; the blessings bestowed upon us are consequential to the gift of his person to us, Rom. viii. 32; he first delivered him for us, and with him gives us all things. The blessings expected are not the object of our faith, but Christ by whom those benefits were obtained, and from whom they are communicated to us. And though it be impossible to be a partaker of true faith, and renounce the benefit of Christ’s essential Godhead, yet it is not a ~~simple~~ faith in his Godhead, or manhood, abstractedly considered, which the Scripture treats of, but

faith in his person as God-man ; hence it is put in the front of all the mysteries of the Gospel, “ God was manifested in the flesh.” 1 Tim. iii. 16. That the person of Christ, as God-man, is the principal object of faith, and is the foundation of all else which we believe on him for, as he is our Saviour, appears from the following scriptures, 1 John v. 5. “ Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that *Jesus is the Son of God.*” It is in the virtue and strength of this faith, that Jesus is the Son of God, that we have victory over the world. Martha’s faith was fixed here, as appears from her reply to Christ, John xi. 27. “ Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, *the Son of God*, which should come into the world.” And as foundations, which bear up the whole building, oftentimes lie hid underground, after they are laid ; so it is with respect to our faith in principles and foundations, which bear us up, and all our spiritual building ; yet, though they remain in our hearts, and support all our faith, they are not always drawn out in our thoughts, though at first they were inlaid as such. As I have given you a general account of the particular objects of faith, I come to speak of the particular acts of faith, which are put forth towards and exercised upon these objects. And it will be found in experience, to be an infallible truth, that our faith will always be in proportion to *our spiritual knowledge* of the object. Hence, I again must observe, that whatsoever knowledge, conceptions, views, and apprehensions, the Holy Ghost hath formed in our minds of Christ, will be drawn forth and discovered

by his sacred influences upon us. He will present to our view the object, and fix our minds upon the object, as revealed by him; which revelation, will always be exactly agreeable to his testimony of Christ in the word. Faith is first drawn forth by the Holy Spirit, and exercised upon the *atonement of Christ*, as altogether suitable to the state of sin, guilt, and misery, the soul was in and under in its natural state. And it is what faith eyes in Christ; it is what it apprehends of Christ in his sorrows, griefs, wounds, and sacrifice, which gives peace and rest. Under views of sin and guilt, the believer is directed by the Spirit in the word, to *look unto Jesus*, and every look to Christ affords fresh healing, cure, and peace. It is not by faith we are healed; our healing is in Christ's blood, and by apprehending it we enjoy the blessing and benefit of it. The principal act of faith consists in dealing with Christ as a Saviour, in receiving him, and giving full credit to what the Father hath declared concerning his infinite delight in his person, and acceptance of his work; which, when we are well grounded in this truth, will make way for the continued exercise of our faith upon the *righteousness of our Lord*; then faith will be exercised in contemplations upon the immense and consummate worth of the personal obedience of our Lord, which will cause us to value his blood and righteousness above earth; yea, above and more than heaven and eternal glory.

It will be acted upon *God our heavenly Father*,



as at perfect peace with us in Christ Jesus, and in viewing him as having blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. To close this head, we shall find in experience, that as faith is wrought upon by the blessed Spirit, and under his immediate influence, light and testimony; it takes in passively through the beams of the Spirit, sights of Christ; so that by this means Christ will dwell in the heart, and there will be a spiritual view of him, a beholding of his glory, which will make way for actual communion with him, and draw out faith into real exercise upon him. The life of faith springs from *knowing Christ*; is fed, strengthened, and renewed, by spiritual believing meditations on the Lord Jesus, and is carried on in the soul by the divine power of the Holy Ghost. And, the particular acts of this life of faith, consists in beholding Christ, living on him, cleaving to him, and holding free communion with him; which are the blessed fruits and effects of being brought by the Holy Spirit, to know our union to and interest in the Lamb; which being evidenced to us from the word and by the Spirit, he leads us to look off ourselves to Christ, and to live out of ourselves on him; so that the life we live, is a life of faith in the Son of God, and every act of faith is the fruit and evidence of that life. All and every act of spiritual faith is put forth upon Christ, on the Father as reconciled in him; and on the free grace of the Essential Three, which is the fountain of our salvation. All that Christ is, hath done, and is doing in heaven, will be the object of the believer's

study, faith and meditations ; and his thoughts will be exercised thereon, distinctly and particularly. And this brings me, in the

Last place, to shew the blessed state true believers are in, as expressed in the words of our text. *He that believeth on him is not condemned.* All true believers in Christ, are in a state which may be truly styled *Blessed*, for it is declared in the word, that *there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.* Their persons are beloved of God, and accepted by him in the *beloved*. They are made righteous in Christ, are clothed with him, and by him, as the Lord their righteousness ; in which robe of salvation they shine with lustre and brilliancy even in the sight of God ; are justified from all things, entitled to heaven and glory, and adorned for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Believers in Christ, have all their sins atoned for, and cast behind God's back ; and are, through the most precious blood-shedding of the Lamb, without all spot and stain of sin in the sight of God ; for the blood of Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth them from all their spots and stains. Hear what the Lord's word declares concerning them. " Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." " Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works." Paul writes thus to believers at Collosse : " And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." And in his first chapter of that epistle, he says, " And you that were sometime alienated and

enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable, and un-reproveable in his sight." And this state into which Saints are introduced and brought to centre in, by believing, is a permanent one. It is a state of perfect justification, pardon, and acceptance; in which grace reigns through the righteousness of Christ unto eternal life.

He that believeth on Christ is safe, secure in life, blessed in death, for "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." Though the Lord's elect, as one with Christ, as interested in his personal undertakings, obedience, and sacrifice, are in the Lord's sight beloved, and in his immutable will justified and pardoned, yet they know it not until it be given unto them to believe in the Lord Jesus; at which time, the Lord's goodness and glory passeth before them, and will continue so to do, throughout time; yea, throughout eternity. May you, who are believers in Christ, be led by the Spirit to rejoice in the rock of salvation. And may you, who are unbelievers at present, be led to consider your state. May the Lord bless what hath been delivered, if it please him. *Amen.*

# SERMON IX.

THE EVERLASTING VIRTUE AND EFFICACY OF  
CHRIST'S BLOOD.

1 JOHN I. 7.

*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from  
all sin.*

**I**T is of infinite importance to us, who are sinners of the human race, to have a spiritual, true, right, and proper knowledge, belief, and application of this momentous truth, revealed, and declared in our text, and to have it divinely brought home and sealed on our hearts by the Spirit of God. Nothing can bear up faith and hope in God, at all times and for all things, amidst the various temptations, trials, miseries, and evils of the present state, but the truth contained in this scripture, which I have now read unto you. In which you have sin, the disease, and Christ, the physician—sin, the malady, and Christ's blood, the medicine—sin the cause, fountain, and spring, of all inherent and actual pollution, uncleanness and guilt—and Christ's blood, *the fountain*

*opened for sin and for uncleanness.* Whosoever he be therefore, whose eyes the Lord has opened, and whose mind is illuminated by the Holy Spirit to see, feel, and perceive the infinite filthiness, horrible guilt, and exceeding evil of sin ; who has and does in himself, inwardly experience, perceive, and know the defilement, ruin, and misery, it has introduced into every faculty of his soul and body ; into each and every sense and member thereof ; may well give all credence to the divine record and testimony given in the words before us, concerning the virtue and efficacy of Christ's most precious blood-shedding. *He then who hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith,* in the words before us, for the consolation of sin-burdened minds, to ease the guilty consciences, holding forth this truth for the encouragement of such—"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." 'The holy Apostle, in the beginning of this chapter, sets forth Christ in his glorious person as *God-man* ; he declares his eternity as such, styling him, *that which was from the beginning*, and describes his excellency, giving him the title of *The Word of Life* ; as having life in himself, and from himself, as the second person in the Incomprehensible Essence :—and as united to the nature of man, whereby he became *God-man* ; he gives life *natural, spiritual, and eternal*, to all creatures, according to their states, and several capacities. *This essential word of life*, as co-existent in the Godhead, by essential union with the Father, and the Spirit, enjoying incommunicable blessedness, in a life of ineffable communion with them, from everlasting ; and he

who was *eternal life*, who was with the Father, distinct in personality, yet equal with him in essence, majesty, and glory ; was manifested to us, by his mysterious incarnation, to be the source and spring of eternal life to his BELOVED ONES. The writer of this epistle, who was the love and delight of Christ, when he lived upon earth, and who also had free familiar converse with him after his ascension and investiture with glory in heaven, makes these words the preface to this epistle—*That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* And as joy in the Holy Ghost springs from, and is the fruit of our communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he therefore adds, *And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.* From hence he goes on to encourage believers, *to cleave with full purpose of heart to the Lord*, holding forth to view their fellowship with God by Jesus Christ, his Son, and our Mediator, as their ultimate happiness and felicity, which would afford and yield them full and complete joy. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, *that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.* For, how can there be a communion between light and darkness, purity and impurity, heaven and hell? *But, if our conversation be agreeable with the Gospel, we have then a fellowship with him. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship*

*one with another, God with us, and we with him. And the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.* It is allowed by the Apostle, that sin remains in those, who have the privilege of being interested in, and instated into all the blessings of the everlasting covenant; who have been, and continue to be influenced by the Holy Spirit to walk with God, and he speaks of the blood of Christ as their great and grand Catholicon for their healing, purity, peace, security, boldness, support, and confidence. In treating on this inestimably precious passage, *the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.* Let us consider the subject in the following method and order :

First, let us take a brief view of this truth, and shew how Christ's blood cleanseth from all sin.

Secondly, point out how the blood of Christ hath a perpetual *virtue*, actually and perfectly to cleanse from all sin.

Thirdly, declare from whence ariseth the worth and value of the blood of Jesus Christ; it is from his divine Sonship, it is *the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God, which cleanseth us from all sin.*—And,

Lastly, what a foundation for comfort is laid in the words before us. Of all these particulars, we will, as the Lord is pleased to direct and assist, treat according to the fore-mentioned manner. The first head, and particular branch of our present subject, is, to take a brief view of this truth, and shew how Christ's blood cleanseth from all sin. As sin ariseth from the mutability of the creature, and is man's invention, act, and work; so the finding out a re-

medy to cure the malady of sin, is to be ascribed wholly to the infinite wisdom and goodness of God. From everlasting *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.* Observe, that as God in his transaction with Christ in eternity, engaged to lay our sins on him; so by virtue of the compact between the Father and the Son, the elect were discharged; and so it follows, *not imputing their trespasses unto them.* God chose the persons of his elect in the person of the God-man, Christ Jesus, their Head, before the foundation of the world. In him they were accepted, to him they were related—to him they were united, and interested in him from eternity. He, as their head, husband, and representative, upon the consideration and foreviews of the fall, was called by his divine Father, to engage in the everlasting covenant, to act the part of a Mediator, and to reconcile all things in heaven and earth by his own blood. He was constituted by the Father's will and covenant, to be the Priest, who was to have all the sins of the elect laid on him, who was to bear them, and offer himself a sacrifice for them; thereby making reconciliation for the sins of the people. He was to substitute his person in their law-place, room, and stead; to obey the law for them, to have all their sins, iniquities, and transgressions, transferred from them to himself, on whom they were to be laid; he was to purge away the guilt and filth of them by his own most precious blood-shedding; to answer, even to satisfaction, the demands of infinite justice and holiness, for the demerit of them, by his own personal



sufferings ; he being by his own voluntary covenant-stipulation, to endure and sustain the whole curse and wrath of his Father due unto them. The *responsibility* of Christ for the performance of this work, was founded upon his *co-equality* with the Father, in the self-existent essence, and also upon *the covenant* which obtained between the Father and himself, which gave a virtual efficacy to the whole work of our Lord's mediation. And the atonement of Christ, was to be a personal and particular one ; which should include, take in, and comprehend all, and every one of the sins of the Lord's people ; hence there is a relief in it for them, under all the views they have of their own personal and peculiar sins, spots, and stains : because, the remedy extends its virtue and efficacy unto, and is effectual for each, and all of them. Upon the footing of Christ's engagements, he was consecrated a Priest *over the house of God*, and immediately upon the fall was revealed as such ; was typified in the cherub, and first sacrifice ; all the Prophets which have been since the world began testified of him, that he would be incarnate and take away sin. Isaiah said in his own name, and for the whole elect church of human race, *all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him, the iniquity of us all*. The Baptist proclaimed him to the people as, *The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world*.

And Peter, who lived to see the accomplishment of it, speaking of Christ, says, *Who his own self bare our sins, in his own body on the tree*. Christ, as our

Priest, took our sins to himself, and on himself, and the Lord laid them on *him*, and *made him to be sin for us*. Christ bore the whole body of sin, as it respects the elect, in his own mortal body on the tree, being made the centre of all their sins, as so many lines coming in upon him from the circumference of all ages. And by virtue of the personal and mysterious union which subsisted between Christ the Head and his people, who are his Church, his mystic body, *He loved them, and washed them from all their sins in his own blood*. Thus we view God, as having appointed the death of Christ to be the cure and remedy for sin—his blood to be the fountain of purity, the bath to purge away our stains; and he hath accomplished this glorious design, *by bruising Christ, and putting his soul to grief* for our transgressions. As this illustrious grace and grand design, originated from Jehovah the Father, so he delighted in the views of its accomplishment with infinite complacency and delight. Hence the birth, and whole time of Christ's tabernacling here below, is styled, *The acceptable Year of the Lord*, Isa. lxi. 2; and the season of his sufferings is styled, *The day of Vengeance of our God*: it being the time appointed in the council of the Eternal Three, for the taking away of sin, and for the breaking forth of all the flames of divine wrath upon Christ our sacrifice. The very end of whose incarnation was, *to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness*, Dan. ix. 24; which he hints at in his consummation word,

uttered by him on the cross, *It is finished*. John xix. 30. The death of Christ is, the grand subject of the Scriptures—the foundation laid by God for to manifest mercy and pardon to the elect sons of men—the marrow of the Gospel—the procuring cause of healing, health, and cure ; hence it may be said with safety, no words contain richer grace than these ; *Enemies, reconciled to God by the death of his Son*—it is grace in grain, steeped, and dyed in the blood of Christ. Having taken a brief view of the subject before us, let us proceed further to shew *how* Christ's blood cleanseth from all sin. As the very end for which Christ shed his blood was to take away sin—to cleanse from the guilt and pollution—and save from the demerit of it ; and as, by the shedding of it, he hath perfectly washed, purged, cleansed, justified, and sanctified, his Church from all spot and stain of sin in the sight of God ; so the blood of Christ cleanseth from sin, it being appointed by the Holy Trinity for this very end and purpose. Hence, it may not be amiss to ask, What is meant by the blood of Christ, so frequently mentioned in the Scriptures ? I reply, that the whole of Christ's life and sacrifice is contained in such expressions as are used concerning his most precious blood-shedding. His whole life of obedience, with the offering up of himself, as a sacrifice to God, is our salvation. He entered upon his performance of the law for us, after he had undergone the painful rite of circumcision ; when his most precious blood was shed, and *he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*, by which means his blood was pressed from his

sacred veins. And, though the blood, or death of Christ, is more clearly spoken of, than his obedience, yet it is only because it was the consummating act, and in allusion to the type of Christ's blood in the Old Testament, which blood of the sacrificial animals, *was poured out, laid upon the horns of the altar, and sprinkled round about it.* Blood, in the Old Testament, signified the life of the Beast, it is said, the life of it, or the soul of it, lieth in the blood, Lev. xvii. 14. In the New Testament the blood of Christ is mentioned to signify the sufferings of his soul, the violence of his death, and that by his atonement sin is expiated. The Scripture sets forth the blood or sacrifice of Christ, to be all-sufficient to cleanse from sin, it having been accepted by the Father as the one perfect, spotless propitiation. Which, as it was offered by Christ for all the elect, so it was highly acceptable to God our heavenly Father, who hath imputed it to all those for whom it was offered, and he hath freely forgiven them all trespasses for his name's sake. Christ's blood then cleanseth from sin, as it is imputed by God our heavenly Father to us, who views us in his Son, whom he hath made, constituted, and appointed to be to us, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* We being in Christ, as his members from eternity, represented by him in his covenant-undertakings, and considered by the Father in him, when he bore our sins, when he sweat great drops of blood, when he hung on the cross, and was made a curse for us; so his blood shed to make the atonement complete, cleanseth us from sin before the Lord, and that for ever. And

when the Holy Spirit is pleased influentially to enlighten the mind with the knowledge of Christ crucified, and reveal Christ in the word of the Gospel to the renewed and enlightened understanding, then the soul is brought experimentally to rest upon the blood and death of Christ alone for present and eternal purity, healing, cleansing, and pardon before the Lord ; by which means he has an inward spiritual perception and apprehension of his freedom from the imputation of all sin and guilt, by virtue of Christ's sacrifice offered for him, and imputed by the Father to him. To which we may add the properties ascribed to the blood of Christ in the Scripture.

Believers are said to be saved by the blood of Christ, Rom. v. justified by and washed in it, Rev. i. 5 ; reconciled, sanctified, admitted into the holiest, brought nigh to God ; and of Christ it is said, He purged our sins, which refers to his sacrifice, and blood-shedding, see Heb. i. verse 3 ; xiii. 12 ; x. 19. Peter styles it, Precious blood, and our text tells us, it is *cleansing blood*. And, if a soul present is asking and inquiring, How shall I know Christ shed his blood for me ? I reply, if thou art enlightened by the Holy Spirit from the word to perceive the everlasting value and virtue of Christ's passion, blood, and death, and dost, through the power of the Holy Ghost, give full credit to the Father's testimony in the words before us ; who himself declares, that the blood of his Son cleanseth from all sin, thou canst not have better evidence of thy own personal interest in the *redemption which is in*

*Jesus Christ*, than by receiving the truth contained in the words before us, and sealing them, as an infallible truth, by thy own believing and receiving this testimony of God concerning his Son. The efficacy of Christ's blood is made known in our souls as we are brought by the word and Spirit to believe the truth of what is spoken of it. And what we style the application of it to our consciences, consists entirely in believing its virtue and efficacy to cleanse from sin.

We pass from hence, Secondly, to point out how the blood of Christ hath a perpetual virtue, actually and perfectly, to cleanse from all sin. The very end and design of Christ, by his blood-shedding and sacrifice, being to wash us from our guilt, to cleanse us from our scarlet, crimson stains; so our Lord perfectly effected it, by bearing in his own person, both the guilt and filth of sin, which are absolutely inseparable from each other. By his bearing the guilt of sin, and sustaining the punishment due to it, he satisfied the demands of infinite justice: as by his bearing our spots and pollutions; yea, the very defilements and filth of them, he magnified the holiness of God, as manifested in the divine law, which had, in its manifestative glory, been eclipsed thereby.

From this twofold satisfaction, both to holiness and justice, springs that complete complacency and delight to Jehovah the Father, which he hath taken, doth and will for ever take, in the finished oblation of Jesus Christ: which he esteems as far more honourable to his law and justice, than sin has, or can be, dishonourable to them. He has taken greater pleasure in the sorrows, agonies, sufferings, and soul-

travail of Christ, which he underwent, sustained, and endured, to satisfy for the demerit of sin, than he ever took offence with his people for their sinfulness and transgressions. In the death of Christ, which is the remedy for the sins of the elect, the highest perfections of God-head shine forth with peculiar lustre and glory. The propitiation of Christ and his sacrificial blood, hath an eternal worth, infinite efficacy, and a perpetual virtue, which is always fresh before the throne, and prevalent with God, and it is set forth as such in the following scriptures. “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness,” Zech. xiii. 1 ; in which words, Christ’s blood is set forth as an open and ever-running fountain, to wash from all uncleanness.

It is thus represented in allusion to the water of separation, and purification of sin, Numb. xix. 9. 19 The figurative expressions in the words, refer to the waters of the temple, which it is probable proceeded from many conduits under ground, by which the water was brought for the use of so many sacrifices, and other services. And among the rest, there were some which came out by the altar, expressive of the grace of God, which flows from his heart, through the sacrifice of his Son to us.

The other scripture, which sets forth the constant perpetual virtue of Christ’s blood, is the text we are explaining, in which we read thus, *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth*. The word *cleanseth*, is in the present tense. Christ’s blood *cleanseth*; it is not, *hath cleansed*, or *will cleanse*; but, it is declared

that it *cleanseth from all sin*. Our Jesus, when he had shed his most precious blood, and obtained for us eternal redemption, entered heaven *as the Lamb of God*, who, by the sacrifice of himself had *purged our sins*, and he is our propitiation in heaven. He was our Priest upon the cross to make expiation for us: he is our Priest in the court of heaven, to plead his atonement before the tribunal of justice, and the throne of mercy, against the curses of the law—the accusations of justice—the charges of Satan, which he brings in against us, and to keep off the punishment which our guilt deserves. Christ's life in heaven is, as it were, a constant presenting to his Father, the sacrifice which he hath offered. All his pleas are founded upon the virtue and efficacy of it. His eternal, everlasting, unchangeable Priesthood, gives perpetual virtue to his atoning blood, to cleanse us in this, and every given moment, from all spot and stain of sin. Which cleansing, is actually and perfectly complete, because now, at this present time, though the body of sin and death is within us, and felt by us; yet there is, *no condemnation to them, who are in Christ Jesus*, for his blood *cleanseth us from all sin*. The blood of Christ doth perfectly and actually cleanse us from sin, as it is imputed to us, and as God views us washed and purified therein. Christ's blood cleanseth from all spots, stains, and defilements, from all sorts and kinds of filthiness. Such as are cleansed therein, and thereby, are more pure in the Lord's sight than the Angels who never sinned; yea, they are as pure as



the blood of Christ can make them. Here let us consider that the presentation of Christ, which he makes of us before the throne of God, as our Sacrifice, Priest, Intercessor, and Advocate, is our eternal security; and our everlasting purity. Our completeness in him, and how he represents us in heaven, before his Father, the Apostle informs us, who, writing to the Colossians, says, *And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unproveable in his sight.* Col. i. 21, 22. The memorial of Christ's passion, kept up in heaven, by our Lord's appearing there, *as a Lamb newly slain*, gives infinite delight to God our heavenly Father, who beholds the God-man, our Head, with everlasting joy. *In him his soul delighteth.* He knows the personal worth of the offering, and the virtue and efficacy of the Mediator's most precious blood-shedding; and views all his people in the person, obedience, and atonement of *the Lord our Righteousness.* *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.* Before I close this second head of our discourse, I would add, the perpetual virtue of Christ's blood, actually and perfectly to cleanse from all sin, in the sight of God, and before the Lord, appears from the peace made by it, which is eternal; the pardon of sin obtained through it, which is irrevocable; and the right of access which believers have, to enter with boldness into the holiest of all, by the blood of Jesus. The

blood of Christ is styled by the Apostle, in the last chapter of the Hebrews, *The blood of the everlasting covenant*. Upon the shedding of which, God brought back again from the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep: he having made peace by the blood of his cross. God takes the style and title of the *God of Peace*, from the covenant of peace, which was founded upon his transactions with his co-essential Son; and ratified, confirmed, and established by the blood and death of Christ. Having accepted the person, obedience, and soul-travail of his Son, he is at perfect peace with all his people in him. Being at perfect peace with them, *he freely pardons all their iniquities*. The perfection of which is thus expressed by Paul, *Having forgiven you all trespasses*. Our healing, purity, and pardon, flow from Christ; yea, sanctification is also the fruit of the Messiah's death, as you may see by reading from the 1st to the end of the 16th verse of the 10th chapter to the Hebrews, as the writer of that epistle argues, where remission of sin is, there is no more offering for it. And the perfect remission of sins, upon the consideration of the consummate worth of Christ's oblation, is thus pronounced by the Lord himself, *I will be merciful to your unrighteousness, and your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more*. Which is a proof of the everlasting and perpetual efficacy of our Lord's sacrifice, in the faith of which, we have boldness to enter into the holiest, *Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Jesus*. We proceed, Thirdly, to declare from whence ariseth the worth and value of the

blood of Jesus Christ ; it is from his divine Sonship ; it is the blood of Jesus Christ the *Son* of God, which cleanseth us from all sin. To cleanse from sin is the work of Christ alone.

It is solely and only the fruit and effect of his sin-expiating blood, which receives its worth and efficacy from the person of Christ, God-man, who, in the Godhead, as considered in his divine essential nature, and distinct personality, was God the Son, begotten of the Father before all worlds, and he is also man of the substance of his mother born in the world—perfect God, and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh, which subsisted, and will for ever subsist in personal union to him, by virtue of the hypostatical union of it to himself. Of all those truths, revealed by the word of inspiration, none is of more importance than that which concerns the self-existence of Jesus Christ.

The whole link and chain of Gospel truths, contained in divine revelation, is built upon it, and held together and influenced by it. Therefore, there is not a scripture which treats of Christ in his Priestly work, as purifying his people from sin, but his eternal Godhead is fully and expressly declared. I might go over the scriptures, and quote such to you as roundly and positively describe eternity, immensity, omnipresence, omnipotence, immutability, necessity, and self-existence, to our Christ ; and which also style him the *Great God*, the *Living God*, the *True God*, the *Only Wise God*, *God over All*, *Blessed for Ever*, *Amen*. And declare, that in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, bodily, or

personally. For which as a sample, see Titus ii. 13; Heb. iii. 12; 1 John v. 20; Jude xxv; Rom. ix. 14; Col. ii. 9. But I must chiefly confine myself to our text, which sufficiently testifies, for our present purpose, this truth, and lays the whole emphasis concerning the virtue of Christ's blood on these words, *His Son*: the Son of God, who is equal with God, and truly and properly God, co-equal and co-essential with the Father in the essence-existing, and who became incarnate to save his people from their sins. He lived, obeyed, suffered, and died as God-man, the surety of his people; and he being God manifested in the flesh, all the worth and efficacy of Godhead was contained in his life and death, which gave that everlasting dignity, value, and virtue, to his obedience and blood, to render it effectual both in time and throughout eternity, to cleanse his people from all sin. The efficacy of Christ's most precious blood, which effectually cleanseth from every spot and stain of sin, ariseth from his being *God-man*. The essential dignity of his person, stamps dignity on all his mediatory acts, gives lustre and glory to the whole, and renders them of infinite worth. Also the blood of Christ may be said to receive its virtue to cleanse us from all sin, from the WILL of God the Father, and his covenant-engagements with his Son: as it was notified by him in the eternal council, which issued in an everlasting covenant, that upon the condition of Christ's making *his soul an offering for sin; his seed, the travail of his soul*, should be in the sight and view of his holiness, law, and justice;

spotless and innocent. The very form, or ground of justification and pardon, consists in God's WILL, not to impute sin to his people, but to his Son. And having imputed it to his Son, he imputes all the perfection of his life, sufferings, blood and death to them. As the blood of Christ received its value from his divine Sonship, the incomprehensible eternal relation which he stood in to his Father; so he was the surety of his people, as the Son of God, before he became the Son of Man. His blood was shed as a *God-man, Jehovah's Equal, and Shepherd*, pursuant to the interposition he made as the *Son of God* in our stead, by his voluntary engagements and stipulation for us in eternity. The value and efficacy which his blood had in our salvation, was from his Deity, he being the *Son of God*, under which consideration he entered into the relation of a mediator for us. It was he who was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, who upholds all things by the word of his power, who did by himself, in his own glorious person, *purge our sins*. The greatness and super-eminent worth of Christ's life and death as God-man, undertaken by him at his Father's call, and finished by him as the surety of his people, to satisfy the demands of law and justice, exceed all the evil that is in sin, and honour God more than ever sin dishonoured him. His life is called the life of God, 1 John iii. 16; *God*, says the Apostle, *laid down his life for us*. His righteousness is called, the righteousness of God. This is his name, says Jeremiah, *Jehovah our Righteousness*.

His blood is called, the Blood of God. *Feed*, says Paul, *the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood*; Acts xx. 28. Thus I am brought, Lastly, to shew, what a foundation for comfort is laid in the words before us. For sin, all sin, to be washed away, and for us to be cleansed from all sin in Christ's most precious blood, is a foundation for comfort indeed! and inexpressible comfort breaks forth, whether we look backward or forward. If we look to the generations of old, and see how all from Adam to Christ, which belonged to the election of Grace, were saved, washed, cleansed, and purified, we find, it was all through the propitiatory virtue of Christ's most precious blood-shedding. Isaiah, speaking in all their names concerning this subject, says, "By his stripes we are healed." If we look to the time when Christ hung on the cross, shedding his blood most freely for us, we shall hear him uttering his first words thereon for his elect crucifiers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." These words give us a view of his heart, and set before us the virtue of his blood, which was sufficient to wash out the greatest guilt which sin had ever brought upon the consciences of the sons of men. If we look to the time since Christ "poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors," a long list of sinners, who have found redemption through his blood, are presented to our view in the New Testament; yea, the words of our text hold forth the virtue of Christ's blood to us, to the very present day, hour, and moment; and inform us, that it will continue to be the same to the end of

time. The words are, as observed before, in the present tense. "The blood of Christ *cleanseth* us." Are any of you saying, But I want an application of it? Sirs! all mistakes in spiritual matters are pernicious to our souls, even such as seem to us common ones, and trivial. The application of Christ's blood to us, consists in our being brought from the word and by the Spirit to know and believe its virtue and efficacy. The whole Trinity are concerned in this cleansing us from sin. The Father appointed the blood of Christ to be the means of our purity and cleansing. The Son shed his blood, and opened the fountain for our everlasting benefit. The Holy Ghost reveals the infinite virtue, and sets before us in the Gospel, the healing efficacy of the blood of the Lamb. He gives us inward spiritual views, from the word, of its being the all-sufficient atonement for sin; and enables us to believe the truth of his own testimony concerning its virtue to cleanse us from all sin. In our believing, he seals his own truth upon our hearts. All sin! who can fathom the comfort that is in this extensiveness, *All sin!* As the great Charnock says, "That blood that cleanseth so many from sin, and from such multitude of sins in their several capacities, can cleanse you from all your sins, were they as great as all those jointly, that have been cleansed by it from the beginning of the world."

Sirs! it is in receiving the truth contained in our text, and giving full credit to it, by believing, that we receive the benefit. I add no more. The Lord bless his truth. *Amen.*

# SERMON X.

ON THE ORDINANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

I CORINTHIANS XI. 26.

*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup,  
ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

**H**AVING in view and prospect the administration of that most sacred and august New Testament Ordinance, the supper of the Lord, I thought a discourse upon the nature, end, and design of that holy institution, might not be unsuitable unto you. As it may serve to encourage believers to enter upon this great duty of remembering the sufferings and death of Christ, in order that they may express their love to him, and may gain by faith clearer views of his boundless love to them. The Church of Corinth, to whom this epistle is directed, seems to have been planted by the Apostle Paul, and well watered by the ministrations of others—but during his personal absence from it, many errors and evils had crept into it, and among other evils, this was one, an irreverent use, or rather, an irreverent abuse of the Lord's Supper.

The Apostle being about to tax them for it,



begins this chapter in a very prudent manner. First, by calling upon them to follow him, as far as he followed Christ. And secondly, by praising them as far as they were praise-worthy.

“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.” He then proceeds to treat of the modest—decent—and religious carriage—which it became them to exercise in the house of God, because the holy Angels were invisible spectators of their behaviour and worship—and then he enters upon noticing the party divisions and dissensions which were among them, and which hindered them from a right, reverent, and profitable attendance, upon the Supper of the Lord: and labours to reduce them to a religious, holy, and sober use of it. This he does by refreshing their memories with a very circumstantial, and particular account of the institution of this Sacred Feast. “For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.” To which the Apostle subjoins the words of our text, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come;” which fully

discovers that by this ordinance, the death of Christ is set forth, and represented—or, if the words are to be read as they are in the margin; “shew ye” forth the Lord’s death; it is hereby intimated, that believers, who are under an indispensable obligation to observe this ordinance, should have their thoughts, and hearts, and meditations, full of the sufferings of Christ—and their mouths full of thanksgivings unto him for the benefits and blessings which flow from his wonderful death—and that until he come. For this ordinance is to be a perpetual one, and not to cease until Christ himself appears the second time, without sin, unto salvation. Before I enter particularly upon the text, give me leave to survey the account here given concerning this ordinance—in which the Apostle informs us concerning the *author* of it—the *time* when it was instituted—the *actions* performed—and the *command* given. The Apostle is exceeding careful to inform us, that he received an account of this ordinance from the Lord himself; which he revealed and made known unto the Apostle, either at his first conversion when he was made a minister and an Apostle—or when he was caught up into the third heaven, “where he heard unspeakable words, which it was not possible for a man to utter.” And Paul, as a steward of the manifold grace of God, faithfully delivers it to the Church. “For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you.” So that from hence we learn that this is a divine institution, and that the Lord himself carefully informed this Apostle, concerning it; which should teach

us at all times, when we attend to the observance of it, to approach the Lord in it, with reverence and Godly fear. The divine author of this means of grace, is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal and only-begotten Son of God—the Saviour of his body—the only Head and King of his Church and people, whom God the Father hath set upon his holy hill of Zion—whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and whose throne is for ever and ever. He is Zion's King and Lawgiver—his instituted Church is the seat of divine worship and ordinances—and he has promised to be with it always, even unto the end of the world, *Amen*; and declares that the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against it. He, as King of Saints, hath instituted the form and order of his Gospel Church—hath informed us what his Church should consist of—hath appointed every office in it—gives proper gifts and qualifications, to every one of his officers, which he hath called to exercise any office in it—and hath commanded them to observe and practise in his name and by his authority—*Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*—both which are to continue and remain unshaken until he descends from heaven, to take his Church, which is his bride and spouse, to the everlasting enjoyment of himself in the heaven of heavens. Having observed that the Lord Jesus Christ—the Son of God—the Saviour of his People—the Head and King of Saints—is the author—appointer—and commander of this means of grace:—I go on to observe *the time when*, it was by him instituted and ordained.

It was that very night in which he was betrayed, when he was about to conflict with his Father's wrath—to sweat great drops of blood—to be in an agony—and to experience, what caused him to say, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death. Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me.” It was on this tremendous night—and in a prospect of his soul-sufferings and inconceivable agonies, which he was about to suffer from his Father's wrath and justice, for the sins of his people, that he ordained this memorial of his sufferings and death; and which discovers the boundless love of his heart towards his Church and people. That very night on which he was betrayed, ere he entered upon his amazing and overwhelming sorrows—he, in the presence of his Apostles—took bread—which he separated from a common to a sacred use, and set it apart in this ordinance to be a *figure—symbol—and emblem* of his body—which he had assumed into personal union, according to his Father's divine appointment, in order that in it he might obey the law—bear the sins of his people—and suffer in it the punishment due to their sins. “And when he had given thanks,”—to his divine Father, for what was signified by it, for the true bread, which he himself was, and which he gave for the life of his people—“he brake it”—to signify how his body was to be broken, bruised, and wounded, through buffetings, scourgings, and plating a crown of thorns; which was put upon his head, to point out the piercings of his hands and feet with nails, and his side with a

spear :—" And said, Take, eat ;" pointing out to them hereby the free love of his heart, in giving himself for them, and in giving himself unto them, with all the blessings and benefits of his complete and eternal redemption—and encouraging them by faith to take him, and to feed upon him, as the living and true bread—which would nourish them up unto everlasting life, of which whosoever eateth shall live for ever—adding—" This is my body"—a figure—symbol—and sign of it, and as it had been broken by him, it represented his wounds, bruises, sufferings, and death.—" Which is broken for you ;" in their room and stead—as their surety and substitute, and for their everlasting benefit—" This do in remembrance of me."—" After the same manner also he took the cup"—and blessed and gave thanks to his divine Father, as he did before when he took the bread "when he had supped"—*i. e.* after he had, together with his disciples, partook of the Paschal Supper—and having given them the bread, the principal part of the Lord's Supper—then he took the cup, and set it apart from a common to a sacred use, to be a *figure—symbol—and emblem* of his blood—" and gave thanks"—blessing his divine Father for all the fruits and effects of the travail of his soul, which would redound to the everlasting consolation of his people ;—" and gave the cup to his Disciples"—saying, " This cup is the New Testament in my blood"—it is the figure and symbol of my blood—which is to be shed for the expiation of sin—for the satisfaction of infinite justice—to obtain remission of

sins—and to seal and ratify the everlasting covenant—“This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.” So that we may from hence learn, that the bread and wine set upon the Lord's table, represent the body and blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.—That the separating them from a common to a sacred use, points out the eternal designation and appointment of Christ from everlasting, to the work and office of redeeming his people (by his sorrows and sufferings) from their sins. That the breaking of the bread, is to represent to us, how Christ's body was broken, bruised, and wounded, to obtain our salvation. And that the wine in this ordinance, is to represent unto us the most precious blood of Christ, by the shedding of which we are brought nigh unto God.—That the taking, eating, and drinking—denote that Christ gives himself freely to his people, that they lay hold of him by faith, and that their souls are inwardly strengthened—comforted—and refreshed, by their feeding spiritually upon Christ crucified; which leads me further, in pursuance with the design of this discourse, to set before you more fully the nature—end—and design of this solemn ordinance: and which our text will give us some instruction in—“For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew, or, shew ye, forth the Lord's death till he come.” From the words of the text, we learn the following things.

First, that the principal end of the Lord's Supper, is to commemorate the death of Christ.

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Secondly, that it is the duty of believers, in their observance of it, to shew forth the Lord's death. And,

Thirdly, that this ordinance, is to be continued in the Church until the Lord come. And,

Fourthly, that the death of Christ in this ordinance, should be frequently remembered. "For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come." We are, in the

First place, to consider and attend to this, that the principal end and design of the Lord's Supper, is to commemorate the death of Christ. And this will clearly appear from the institution itself. It was appointed for this very end, to set before us the sorrows, sufferings, and death of the adorable Messiah. Christ crucified is most strikingly set forth to the view of our faith here. There is this difference between the ordinance of preaching the Gospel, and this ordinance of the Supper. In the Gospel, Christ is preached to the ear—in this, Christ is set forth to our spiritual senses. And, in this respect, the preaching of the Gospel, and the ordinance of the Supper, differ. The Gospel sets forth Christ crucified, and discovers and reveals him in his perfect work and glorious offices. But in the preaching it, though Christ is always the subject—and he is in it, the same yesterday—to day—and for ever:—yet sometimes the Gospel discovers one part of Christ, and sometimes another. Whereas, in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, the whole of Christ is exhibited. His person, as Immanuel—God-man—an Almighty

Saviour and Redeemer—the love of his heart—the sorrows of his soul—his bearing the sins of his people in his own body on the tree—his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross—together with the benefits, which, by his most precious blood-shedding, he hath obtained for his people, are always set before us in this divine institution. In it, in a most lively manner, the love of Christ is manifested. For here we, as in a picture, survey this lover Christ, and his wonderful love. We here view, by faith, the love of Christ, as the fountain, and spring of all his mediatory acts. “Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.” His love, which he bore in his own heart, towards his dear people from everlasting—and his eternal delights in the elect sons of men, we here call to mind. That love which brought him down from the heaven of heavens—and which moved him to take upon himself the form of a servant—and which flamed forth when he hung upon the cross, is set before us in this ordinance to the view of our faith. And here we see, the utmost depth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and the greatest expression of it; in that the Lord of glory—the only-begotten Son of God—who is co-equal—co-eternal—and co-essential—with the Father, and the Holy Ghost—Jehovah, incarnate, lays aside, for a season, the glory, which, as God-man, he (considered as such,) had with the Father, before the world was, and is here seen as laying down the life of his humanity, and dying for sinners



—rebels—and enemies! O stupendous—marvellous grace! the wonder and admiration of all the Host of Angelic Beings that surround Jehovah's throne! As the love of Christ is wonderful—and is exhibited, represented, and viewed by faith in this ordinance—it is all ocean—all light—a love which puzzles and perplexes the Angels, those Spirits of light and glory—a mighty depth, where all our thoughts are drowned! So here, the inconceivable sufferings of Christ are set before us, and we here take a view of the manner of our Lord's sufferings, and do, as it were, stand under his Cross, and see him crowned with thorns—nailed to the tree—bearing in his own body, the intolerable burden and load of all the sins, iniquities, and transgressions, of all his people; and enduring in his personal sufferings, the whole curse of God's wrath due to us for our crimes. We here see Jesus, made a little lower than the Angels; for the suffering of death: and remember, how the immaculate Lamb of God gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. How he sweat great drops of blood in the garden, and cried out, being in an agony, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." We recall to mind how he was, by one of his own Disciples, betrayed into the hands of sinful men—who blindfolded him—buffeted him—bound him to a pillar—scourged—mocked, and crucified him. Here, we remember, the inconceivable agonies of his righteous soul—when he cried out, under the weight of divine wrath—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken

me.” And we here see, that by his personal sufferings, he hath delivered us from the wrath to come; and that by his stripes we are healed. Here, we may view the everlasting love of God, in “so loving the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us; and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” Here, the eternal Son of God is viewed, as substituting himself in the room and stead of his people, as wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and making peace through the blood of his cross. And all the moral attributes of Jehovah, shine forth in the sufferings and death, which we remember. Here shines, infinite justice—consummate purity—and perfect holiness. Grace—love and mercy—here display their highest glory—and here we see God is discovered to be just, and at the same time, the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Christ, as redeeming his people, and as washing them from their sins in his own blood, is here the object of our faith. And the benefits, which flow from the most precious blood-shedding of our most adorable Saviour, are in this ordinance presented to our spiritual view. The virtue—value, worth, dignity, and everlasting efficacy of the blood-shedding—agonies—sufferings—oblation—and death of Jesus Christ—are here represented unto us. And the fruits and blessings, flowing from this sacrifice, are here set before us. We view by faith, “enemies reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” Sins—iniquities—and trans-

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gressions—blotted out as a thick cloud ;—and fully—freely—and eternally pardoned and abolished, through the blood of Christ; and an everlasting peace made, and established between God and his people, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. Here, with great delight, we may reflect upon the end and design of Christ's death—as decreed and appointed by God the Father, for the manifestation of his love—the honour of his justice—for the expiation of sin—and for the venting his mercy—to the glory of all his divine perfections—towards sinners through the slain Lamb. Here, we may by faith view the blood of Christ, to be pardoning—purging—cleansing—redeeming—justifying—and sanctifying blood; by the which we draw nigh unto God. And here, we may sit down under the shadow of Christ, with great delight, and find the fruit of his redemption, sweet to our taste. In this ordinance, we remember Christ's death, as our sacrifice, and God's end and design in it, as the perfect expiation of our sin.—And the perpetual efficacy of Christ's death, is here to be considered by us. It is the perpetual prevailing efficacy, which the sacrifice of Christ hath with God, which lays the foundation of all our hopes, and for all our boldness before the Lord. And it is in consequence of the everlasting value and efficacy of it, and of Jehovah's high approbation and delight in it, that we are commanded to continue upon earth, the remembrance of it. So that, whenever we meet to commemorate the death of Christ, it becomes us to fix our whole dependance upon the sacrifice which our great High

Priest hath once offered for us—and to praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the blessings and benefits of it. I go on, and proceed,

Secondly, to consider, that it is the duty of believers in their observance of this ordinance, to shew forth the Lord's death. And this should be with the utmost reverence and devotion. As in this institution the death of Christ is shewed forth; and the design of it is to declare that Christ died for the sins of his people; and to represent how his body was broken, and his blood shed for them; so it is the duty of every particular believer, in this means of grace, to shew forth the Lord's death—by an hearty approving of God's infinite wisdom, discovered in it—and by adoring God for his stupendous love—manifested, in not sparing his own Son, but delivering him up freely for us all. The sacrifice of Christ is everlastingly well-pleasing to the Lord—and he would have it remembered on earth, and in heaven. His death yields eternal pleasure and delight to God, and he would have heaven and earth filled with the savour of it. His death is now, of everlasting, inconceivable and continual efficacy, and will be so to the second coming of Christ. “As the Sun sheds his light every day about the world; yet remains a fresh spring of new light in the air every morning: so the blood of Christ, loseth not its virtue, but is as operative, as if we had stood under the Cross, and had it dropped upon our souls, at the instant of his sufferings.” Christ did not only once offer himself a propitiation for sin, but he remains a propitiation for ever.

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This sacrifice was but once offered, which shews the reality of it ; but it is often commemorated, to shew the perpetual virtue of it. And this efficacy of it, is therefore shewn forth in this ordinance ; in which we express our high value, and esteem of it ; and declare that our everlasting hopes are built upon it ; and we plead it before God our heavenly Father, as the procuring cause of all our enjoyments of grace and mercy. It is the duty of believers, in shewing forth the Lord's death, to express their love to Christ, their faith in him, their hope on him, and their thankfulness unto him, for his boundless love, and bottomless mercy—for his bitter sufferings, and inconceivable agonies. And, as the whole of Christ is here represented and discovered—so, the graces of faith, and hope, and love, are here to be particularly exercised. The faith of believers at this feast, should be employed in beholding the Lamb of God—in solemn—deep—and heart-affecting meditations upon his bitter sufferings and death. Hope should here be exercised upon the person—blood and righteousness of the God-man—as its one sole object, and everlasting foundation. And here, love should be exercised, in admiring—praising—and adoring the Lamb that was slain ; “ Who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God.” Here we should consider what an exceeding evil sin is ! what wrath and sufferings are due to sinners for it ! and how Christ himself was made sin, and a curse for us ! Here, we should praise God the Father, for his everlasting love ; and God the Son, for his boundless

mercy, and for those treasures of grace which he hath opened unto us, by his sufferings and death. Our faith should not be exercised upon the Lord's Supper, merely as a duty, but upon the word and promise of Christ. He hath appointed it to be the means of nourishing up our souls unto everlasting life. And, the means whereby this is wrought, is by his putting forth the power of his Spirit in our hearts, and by giving us, truly and spiritually, to feed upon him the true bread of God, which came down from heaven, to give life to an elect world. And our faith exercised upon his word and promise, is the means whereby Christ conveys himself into our hearts, and gives us really and truly to experience the blessings and benefits of his precious Sacrifice. And, it is marvellous grace, when God the Eternal Spirit, is most graciously pleased, so to put forth his divine power in the hearts of his faithful people, that they are enabled to look so steadfastly upon Christ crucified; until their souls inwardly experience the power and virtue of his blood upon their hearts. Christ, and every thing of Christ, should be matter for the believer's meditations here, *i.e.* when they shew forth the Lord's death.—There is an infinite virtue in all this, and it is the means, whereby the Holy Ghost leads real believers, at the Lord's table, into most precious, and blessed communion and fellowship with Jesus—in his life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. It is here, as it is with the Sun, which shines in the heavens, and imparts its light and comfort to this lower world; so the Lord Jesus Christ, though he is in the heaven of

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heavens, and sitteth at the right-hand of God—yet he shines from heaven, his dwelling-place, upon the souls of his people, when they sit down at his table, and shew forth his death; and by the eternal power and grace of the Holy Spirit, which he puts forth in the souls of his people, he gives them to experience real and actual fellowship and communion with himself. So, that they find the Supper of the Lord to be unto them, the communion of Christ's body, and the communion of his blood. And it is sometimes unto them, a foretaste of eternal glory.

They, by feeding upon Christ by faith—are divinely strengthened—receive fresh evidence of Christ's love to them—fresh assurance that their life is hid with Christ in God; and that, “when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, they shall also appear with him in glory.” This brings me to my third particular, viz; That this ordinance is to be continued until the Lord come. Which coming is not to be understood of his coming in the Spirit, but of his personal appearance and coming at the end of the world. And this appears from the practice of the Apostles—who, after the coming and descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, on the Day of Pentecost, continued in their observance of Christ's dying command; of doing this in remembrance of him. Nor, can it be supposed by us, that this ordinance, after its first celebration by our Lord himself, was ever practised by them until his ascension into heaven. From whence he shed abroad richly, and abundantly, the Holy Ghost upon his Church. And it is recorded concerning this primitive Church at Jeru-

sa~~le~~m, over which, for a season, all the Apostles pre-  
sided, “ That they continued steadfastly in the  
Apostles’ doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of  
bread (by which is meant the Supper of the Lord)  
and in prayers,” Acts ii. 42. And as to the believ-  
ing, regenerated Corinthians, the Apostle says, that  
they had received, “ not the spirit of the world, but  
the Spirit which is of God.” And in the words of  
the text, the Apostle gives them, and us, to under-  
stand, that this ordinance of the Supper, is of a last-  
ing and perpetual continuance. Our Lord, before  
his ascension, says to his Disciples, speaking to them  
as Mediator—“ All power is given to me in heaven,  
and in earth.” And then, upon his commissioning  
them to preach the Gospel, he commands them to  
teach all to whom the Gospel came with power,  
and with the Holy Ghost, to observe all things  
whatsoever he had commanded them. So then,  
what Christ hath commanded, should, by virtue  
of his command, be observed till the end of the  
world. For he promiseth his presence with them to  
the end of the world, in their teaching those things  
which he had commanded them. “ Teaching them  
to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded  
you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the  
end of the world, *Amen.* Matt. xxviii. 20. So that  
we learn from hence, that Christ’s Church will con-  
tinue in the world to the end of time. That the  
preaching of the everlasting Gospel will be continued  
in it ; and that ministers will be given by Christ,  
for the edifying of it, and to administer this ordi-  
nance, to the living members of it ; until our Lord,



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by his personal appearance, and his personal presence dwelling with his people, shall supersede and put an end to the use of it. Our Lord's love unto us in this is to be seen, for He would have a constant memorial of his sufferings and death, kept up in his Church, by this institution, that his people might know, that he hath set them as a seal upon his heart, and will remember and think upon them for ever. And, though he is now out of their visible sight—and removed from them into heaven, where in his glorified humanity, he is seen by the Church above—as purer than the sun—and holier than heaven—and they view with transport the Lamb, as newly slain before the throne ! Yet, is he as mindful of his Church upon earth as ever ; and loves them with the same love, which he had for them, when he made his soul an offering for their sins. This ordinance, is to them, as a pledge of his love—an assurance of his heart being fixed upon them—and of his whole delight being in them. And, it is a very suitable reflection, when at the Supper of the Lord, to consider, that he whose death we commemorate—is celebrated in heaven as the Lamb that was slain. That the glorified Saints are praising him for his death—and are beholding with ecstasy, the scars which were made in his sacred hands, and feet, and side, when upon the Cross. And to be considered now, not upon the Cross, but upon his throne, an Almighty Conqueror, who will one day descend from heaven, in all the glories of his royal and most excellent glory and majesty—when his Saints shall behold him to their unspeakable joy, and be called to sit down

in his immediate presence, at his marriage-supper, to celebrate his praise for ever.

This is animating, and this ordinance of the Lord's Supper, is intended for the strengthening and increase of our faith in our adorable Jesus. And, this ordinance was designed by our Lord, that by penetrating through the signs, to the thing signified—our hearts might be warmed more and more with the love of Christ—and our souls divinely drawn after him, and that we might be looking out for his second coming—kingdom and glory. I may conclude this third particular with these words, Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing. It would be blessed to go from the Lord's table below, to his table above. To quit this ordinance, wherein Christ is set forth crucified before our eyes—to behold the Lamb in the midst of the throne, and to enjoy his presence for ever and ever. And this brings me to the fourth particular, which is this, "That the death of Christ in this ordinance, should be frequently remembered.

And surely, such as know Christ, and delight to think, and speak of Jesus, will gladly comply with Christ's dying command, and be heartily glad to remember his death in this holy institution. How often this is to be done is not said. It seems from some passages in the New Testament, as though it was very frequently observed by the first Churches of Christ. And the constant, fixed custom, and rule which some of the Churches of Christ observe, in celebrating Christ's death every month, seems to be a good example to follow. For if this ordinance is

most sacred and solemn—or, if our thoughts in observing it are more devoutly engaged—and our hearts more divinely affected with the remembrance of Christ's dying for us: this is an argument that it is good to be very often engaged in this duty.

And it is becoming in those that love the Lord Jesus Christ, or who desire to love him in sincerity and truth, to be often at the Lord's table. A sense of our own unworthiness, should not prevail with us to absent from this Holy Feast. It should be remembered, that it was instituted for poor, sinful, miserable men, who are brought to hunger and thirst after Christ; and such are welcome, most truly welcome, to this sacred repast. Such as are taught by the Spirit, and are emptied of themselves—ought to wait upon Christ in this ordinance, for spiritual refreshment. And it is ill, and unbecoming of members of Gospel Churches, when they have no real cause for it, to suffer their places to be empty at the Lord's table. It is good, often to come here, that our cold hearts may be warmed; our hard hearts melted; our corruptions conquered, our unbelief subdued; and, that our souls may be sprinkled with the most precious blood of Christ. It should be our earnest request to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we might have actual dealing and fellowship with Christ in this means of grace. A believer would wish to go to the Lord's table, there to celebrate the death of Christ, with the same temper and frame of heart and soul, he would wish to die, and stand at God's tribunal in. And, in what temper and frame of heart and soul, wouldest thou, O believer, wish to

be in, at the hour of death? Thou sayest, in the same frame Paul was, when he prayed not to be found in his own righteousness, but Christ's! This, indeed, is the best frame and disposition of soul we can possibly be in on this side heaven—to rest upon and trust in Christ alone. And therefore, in our approaches to the Lord's table, to be renouncing ourselves, and to be putting on Christ by faith, to present ourselves before the Lord wholly in his Son's righteousness and atonement, is the only way of coming in an acceptable manner. By a frequent attendance at the Lord's table, believers, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, gain more acquaintance with Christ, in the everlasting efficacy of his blood and death.

And here, they have sometimes more of the love of Christ discovered unto them, than in other ordinances. Our business here is to remember Christ. And this is, to Saints, most delightful work—to rove over the glorious work which Christ hath finished, and praise him for it.

I conclude, praying the Lord to bless what has been delivered, as far as it may be for his glory, and his peoples' good. *Amen.*

# SERMON XI.

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THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST, A  
GROUND FOR CONFIDENCE IN HIM.

2 TIMOTHY 1. 12.

*For the which cause I also suffer these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed ; for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

THE heart of Paul flamed with love to the unseen Jesus, for he could not think, speak, preach or write concerning him, without being in spiritual rapture and elevation. He had seen Christ face to face within the vail. He had beheld the Immaculate Lamb with the crown of pure gold upon his head ; seated upon his mediatorial throne, and had heard the enraptured Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, in one divine song, and with one devout ecstasy of transport and admiration, cry, “ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.” The sight and view which our Apostle had of the person

glories, the divine royalties, and transcendent excellencies of the Lord Christ—of his infinite love—unmeasurable mercy—the greatness of his most excellent majesty—his most glorious, complete, and finished salvation; had everlastingly won Paul's heart, drawn and eternally captivated his affections; so that Christ was become the one object of his heart's desire and delight. This filled his soul with the most ardent affection; and he burns with flames of vehement love and desire after, more knowledge of, more communications from, more communion with, and more conformity to the Lord Redeemer. Persecutions, imprisonments; yea, death itself, for the sake of Christ, the advancement of his glory, and in the defence of his Gospel, is truly welcome, is truly desirable, if hereby Paul may be instrumental in bringing glory to his precious Jesus. "I count not my life dear unto myself (saith he), so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." He was at the time of his writing this epistle, a prisoner for Christ, and he wrote it to his dearly beloved son Timothy; stirring him up to the discharge of his ministerial office; and observes at the 7th verse of this chapter, what the Lord had given both of them, whereby they were fitted for this important work. "God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, (they were not cowards in the cause of Christ) but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." He exhorts him upon the consideration of this, to go on witnessing and bearing his testimony for our Lord. What is that? The

glorious Gospel of the blessed God. And there is not a doctrine, an ordinance, a promise, or direction in it, or connected with it, that any of the ministers of Christ have the least reason to be ashamed of. He would not that Timothy should be ashamed because of the afflictions which accompanied the preachers of the Gospel, his own imprisonment for the truth's sake, "or of me, his prisoner." To be the Lord's prisoner, a prisoner for Christ's sake, was one of the highest titles and honours which could possibly be bestowed on him. For though he was bound, the word of God was not bound. His prison became to him a palace, because he enjoyed the Lord's presence, and from it he watered and refreshed the city of God, by the doctrines contained in his most excellent epistles: most of which were written by him when in prison. "Be thou, (says he to Timothy,) a partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel, according to the power of God; who hath saved us"—salvation is a finished work. It was contrived by the Father, undertaken and completely finished by the Son, and it is revealed and effectually applied to the hearts of God's BELOVED ONES, by the Holy Ghost. He observes, what the Lord had already done for them. They were saved. The words are in the past tense. But how came they to know that they were saved? By their being effectually called by the Spirit of God, and made savingly acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ, and salvation by him. "Who hath saved us, and called us." What were they called unto? To the knowledge of Christ, and into communion with him—to holiness,

virtue, and eternal glory, “with an holy calling.” What did their salvation and calling proceed from? Were they of works? No. “Not according to our works.” As for Paul, his salvation and calling could not be of works, as the fruit and consequence thereof: for his works, before calling, had been very bad and shameful. He had been a blasphemer, and a violent persecutor of the people of Christ, and injurious. From whence then did his salvation, and holy and effectual calling proceed? It was from the Lord’s own purpose, which was an eternal one in Christ; and this purpose proceeded from grace, free, rich and sovereign grace! “According to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.” But this being in the heart, thoughts, and purpose of the Lord before all time, how came they by the knowledge of it? It was made “manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” And this Gospel, Paul was appointed by the Lord, to be a preacher and an Apostle of. “Whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an Apostle.” This was an office beyond that of being a preacher. For though all the Apostles were preachers, yet all preachers were not Apostles: —it was the highest office in the Church of Christ, under the New Testament dispensation, as the High Priesthood was under the Old; and as there were thirteen tribes, reckoning the two sons of Joseph, so there were thirteen Apostles, as you reckon Paul among them. And he had the honour of being called



to this high office and dignity by our Lord Jesus Christ himself, after he was risen from the dead. He was likewise appointed to be “a teacher of the Gentiles,” and this it was which drew the envy of the Jews, and their malice so much against him, more than against the rest of the Apostles. They could not bear the thoughts, that God should grant unto the Gentiles eternal life.

Peter had been sent to break down the partition-wall, by preaching the word of salvation to Cornelius and his family ; but Paul was principally appointed as a chosen vessel to bear Christ’s name before the Gentiles, in a more public manner. Indeed, this was the cause of his present imprisonment. He had been seen by the Jews walking in the city of Jerusalem, with one Trophimus, an Ephesian, whom they supposed Paul had brought into the temple, which was, as they thought, defiling it. Upon which conceit, they stirred up the people, laid hold upon Paul, and had it not been for the interposition of the chief captain, they would have killed him. On his being kept in custody, by the Roman officer, he refers to Cæsar to be judged by him, which made way for his being sent to Rome, where he now was. Here he lay bound, not for any capital crime, nor for any criminal offence, but on account of his having preached Christ crucified, to the poor sinners of the Gentiles. “For the which cause (says he) I suffer these things,” (to be imprisoned, and in expectation of death, and all this merely for, and on the account of the Gospel :) “nevertheless, I am not ashamed, neither of Christ, his truth, or people ; nor of any

present or past sufferings for his sake. Nor was there any reason why he should be ashamed, as he did not suffer for any crime or real offence committed against Church or State. “For I know whom I have believed.” He loved an unseen Christ, though he did not trust in an unknown Christ; “and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.” He had committed his soul and body—his **ALL**—his whole concerns into the hands of Christ, and was fully persuaded of Christ’s faithfulness to him, of his care of him, and concern for him.—The words before me, which I shall preach from at this time, are these:—“I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” I will endeavour to explain them in the following method and order:

First, by observing that faith in Christ, is the fruit and effect of our knowledge of him.

Secondly, that believers have good grounds for being fully persuaded that Christ is able to keep them.

Thirdly, will observe, that their souls, which they have cast upon him, and committed unto him, he will keep, and preserve them faultless unto the day of his appearing. I am,

First, to observe, that faith in Christ, is the fruit and effect of our knowledge of him. Paul was once ignorant of Christ. He knew him not. He had no faith in Him, no desires after Him, nor love for Him; and it is thus, with all before conversion; they know not the things which belong to their everlasting

peace. Paul was a great scholar, a strict moralist, well acquainted with the rules and nature of philosophy, and an adept in the languages :—but, with all this, a stranger unto, and extremely ignorant of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal. Nor did his human literature, or natural philosophy help him, or lead him to the knowledge of Jesus.

No ! All that he knew of Jesus, and his resurrection, he was taught from above. It was the Lord himself who enlightened his mind with the saving knowledge of the truth, and drew his heart to himself by his own invincible love and grace. And so it is with all others whom the Lord our God doth call. Every one in his natural state is altogether ignorant of God, and a perfect stranger to the alone All-sufficient Mediator and precious Saviour, who is God-man—Almighty to save. And how are any brought into an acquaintance with him ? It is wholly of grace, through the mighty operation of the Holy Ghost on the soul. He, as the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, is pleased to quicken the soul with spiritual life, to illuminate the understanding with the knowledge of divine truth, and to give an inward spiritual knowledge of Christ to the mind hereby. The outward revelation of Christ unto us, is the written word of the Gospel, which sets him forth and testifies of him, and in which He is clearly, fully, and freely exhibited. But this hath not its effect on us, until the Holy Ghost is pleased to put forth his own power in it, to shine with his own light on it, and open our understandings to understand the Scriptures, and what is written in them concerning Christ—

—his Godhead—his Manhood—the ends and designs of the Father and himself in his wonderful incarnation—life—obedience, sacrifice, and death. It is the great work and office of the Eternal Spirit, in the economy of grace, to reveal Christ and testify of him. He doth this in the word, and by the word ; through his Almighty power and agency, he reveals and makes known the Lord Jesus Christ to the understanding, and in the hearts of poor sinners. Hence the Apostle John says, “ We know that the Son of God is come ; ”—and, that he hath finished transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. But how did John, and other believers, know this ? Why, by the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation. “ He hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.” So that a spiritual understanding to know Christ, as the gift of God, is a principal part of the work of the Holy Ghost upon the regenerate soul. And it is from this knowledge of Christ, received from the word, and by the teachings of God the Spirit, that faith in Christ owes its rise to : and love to Christ springs here-from, as its true and proper cause. If you ask me, what are those sights of Christ, which the Holy Ghost gives us, whereby he begets faith in our hearts ? or which is the first discovery of Christ which the Holy Ghost makes to our souls ? I answer first, the Holy Ghost gives us no other views of Christ than what are exactly agreeable to the revelation made of him in the

scriptures of truth. He discovers and reveals Christ in his divine person, and mediatorial character and office, as the eternal and only-begotten Son of God—as God-man, Jehovah Jesus—as having invariably dwelling in him all the fulness of the Godhead substantially. And secondly, as to the first discovery of Christ, which the Holy Spirit makes to a poor sinner, he reveals him as a Saviour, whose person and perfections are eternal and infinite—he being God, Immanuel, born into our world, to save his people from their sins, and from everlasting misery. His love, as wonderful—his mercy, as everlasting—his righteousness and blood, as wrought out and shed on purpose for the salvation and benefit of poor sinners, is what the Holy Spirit first begins to teach and reveal to them. This is the wonderful grace of the Holy Ghost which he puts forth in the souls of the elect, by which he gives them the saving knowledge of Christ crucified—he presents Christ to the soul in the glass of the everlasting Gospel, and gives the soul hereby a real and spiritual apprehension of Christ—shews the love and mercy, the power and salvation of Jesus to the soul, and herewith taking of the things of Christ and thus discovering them, he allures, draws, and captivates the soul, which is led hereby, through the Almighty power, inward influence, and blessed teachings of the Holy Spirit, to believe in the person, and rest upon the finished work of God, Jesus—and to cast itself upon him for everlasting life. So that Christ is the object, and the Holy Spirit is the revealer of him.

He presents him to the enlightened understanding, brings the will to choose him, the heart to love him, the conscience to rest satisfied with him, and the whole soul to yield and fully submit to be guided and governed by him. Thus Christ is revealed in the hearts of his people, as their one hope of eternal glory. From what has been delivered, I observe, that the word of God is the sole rule and ground of our faith—that Christ revealed in it, is the immediate object of it—and that the Lord the Spirit, when he takes of the things of Christ, and discovers them to us, he draws forth in our souls an act of faith upon Christ, thus made known and revealed, and hereby he becomes precious to us, in our hearts and affections. Hereby our hearts are brought to the enjoyment of his love, and we say of him, that he is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. So that, as Christ is the object of faith, faith is a spiritual perception of him; we see Jesus, and faith exercised on him; our minds engaged in spiritual meditation on him, his salvation, grace, and glory. So then, believers love not an unknown Christ, trust not in one whom they are unacquainted with. Though they believe in, and express love to an unseen Jesus, yet they know him to be the Lord God omnipotent, and that he is to them, Jehovah their Righteousness—that the sacrifice of himself, which he once offered, is their one perfect and everlasting atonement; whereby their persons are completely justified, their sins perfectly abolished from before the Lord, and their iniquities freely, fully, and everlastingly forgiven them. Not that I would

here insinuate, that all believers have equally the same clear and perfect knowledge of Christ. I acknowledge, that there is in the Scriptures the same full revelation of Christ to one as another; but though all believers have the like precious faith given them, which was to the Apostles themselves; yet faith, which is the eye of the soul, cannot see without light, nor any further than as the object is discovered. Now, as we cannot see the Sun but in its own light, so neither can we see the Sun of everlasting Righteousness, but in his light. And, as we cannot see temporal things and objects, without light, so faith cannot see Jesus, but as the Holy Ghost shines upon and enlightens it. To some, Christ is more clearly revealed and discovered, whilst others have a more distant view, and a less apprehension of him, and this is the difference between a weak and strong believer. The weak believer knows but little of Christ, and therefore cannot trust in Christ so fully as a strong believer, who differs from him, in his being led into a greater knowledge and acquaintance with the adorable Saviour. The true knowledge of Christ begets faith in him. “I know (saith Paul) whom I have believed.” He knew him to be God over ALL, blessed for ever.” He knew him to be God-man, Mediator, and he believed in him, and trusted upon him as such. To know Christ by the teaching and revelation of the Holy Spirit, is life everlasting. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. You see, that eternal life depends upon the true and saving knowledge of Christ in

his divine person, mediatorial office, character, and capacity. Our Lord in the 6th chapter of John's Gospel, speaks thus—"And this is the Father's will, or the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life."

Seeing the Son is put before believing, as the cause which produced the effect. So that instead of puzzling and perplexing ourselves with such questions as these—Am I a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ?—Do I believe on the only begotten Son of God? Have I real faith wrought in my heart, proceeding from the Word and Spirit?—It would be well if we did inquire and examine what we think of Christ, and what we know of him, and concerning his finished obedience, and oblation. The greatest thing in Christianity is to know Christ, to believe on him, and receive him into our heart, to dwell and abide with us for ever. And I would exhort you, who are believers, to study and meditate upon the glorious person of our Lord Jesus—and upon the perfect work of salvation finished by him. Study the everlasting sufficiency of the life and death of Jesus to save you from all your sins and miseries, and this will support, increase, and strengthen your faith.

It will also inflame your souls, and draw out your hearts in love to him: for the more you trust in him, the more you will love him; and the more you live in sights and views of what he is to you, and of what he hath done for you, the more glorious he will be in your esteem. He will be considered by you as your ornament and glorious crown—your righte-



ousness, and your ALL in ALL. The Holy Ghost draws the hearts of sinners to Christ, presents him in his suitableness, grace, love, and mercy to their view—gives them faith to believe on him for present and everlasting salvation, and enables many of them from what they have seen, known, and tasted of the word of life, to say, “I know whom I have believed.” Faith hath a real and actual sight of Jesus, and believers can say, “We have seen the Lord:” and it is a spiritual view of Christ by faith, which removes guilt from the conscience, produces a sense of the peace and love of God in the heart, and enables believing persons to say—“We have redemption through the most precious blood-shedding of Jesus, the free and full forgiveness of all our sins.” Every fresh view, which faith takes of Jesus, serves to render him more precious to the soul than he was before. And here I would add, that though no sinner will ever value Christ, until he knows and feels himself lost and undone, yet it is not a sight and sense of sin, simply in itself considered, which drives the soul to Christ, but it is the blessed discoveries which the Holy Ghost makes of Jesus, which draw sinners unto him. It is a most wonderful secret and mystery in religion, but it is an everlasting truth and reality, that God the Father’s love is manifested in drawing poor sinners to the Lord Jesus, by the blessed teachings and influences of his Holy Spirit upon them. And there is no spiritual life in the soul until Christ takes the possession of it. Hence the Apostle saith, “He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life.” All

our spiritual life is solely from, and is the fruit and effect of Christ living in us, and dwelling in our hearts by faith.

Hence Paul saith, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." This brings me,

Secondly, to consider that believers have good grounds for being fully persuaded that Christ is able to keep them.

As the knowledge of Christ is the means of begetting faith in our hearts on him, and love to him, so from what believers know of Jesus, and the power of his resurrection, they are fully persuaded of the Almighty power of Christ to keep them, and of his faithfulness to his word and work, and to the charge which they have reposed in him. What they have committed to his hands, they may be fully persuaded he will keep safely and securely. And what is it, which they have entrusted him with? Their precious souls, their immortal, eternal, and everlasting concerns. When souls are first drawn to Christ, they are led to make a surrender of themselves up into the hands of Jesus, and to trust in his person, blood, and righteousness, for everlasting life. And they have his own faithful word for it, that all which the Father giveth him, shall come to him. And him that cometh unto me, saith he, "I will in nowise cast out." They come to him as poor, lost, miserable, hell-deserving sinners, for pardon, righteousness, and grace. They find the arms of his mercy open to embrace them—the love of his heart to be towards

them, the fountain of his blood to be sufficient to cleanse them, and to keep them eternally and everlastingly pure and spotless in the sight of God : that his righteousness clothes and adorns their souls, and makes them all-fair, glorious, and complete. They find his mercy exceeds their misery, and his fulness of grace their fulness of sin, emptiness and want. So that they sing to his honour, “ The Lord is my portion, therefore will I hope in him.” This begets in their souls, a full and firm persuasion, that Christ is every way sufficient and perfectly qualified to fulfil and make good his faithful word of promise to them in this life, and in that which is to come.

They therefore venture upon him, and are bold to trust him to conduct and bring their souls safe to eternal glory :—to guide them through the journey of life, in that way which he pleaseth and thinks fit and best. They are now no longer their own, but being bought with a price, they are wholly and only the Lord’s; and as far as they live like the Lord’s, they look to him, and live upon him, to turn all things which befall them into real blessings.

Their sins, corruptions, and miseries, teach and preach unto them their continual need and want of Christ; which fit and prepare the soul to receive Christ, and to live upon his salvation. The experimental knowledge which the believer hath of his fallen nature, vile depravity, and inward filthiness humbles him, makes him a cypher in himself, not only in this life, but throughout eternity : where he is left empty that he may be filled with the grace of Christ here, and with the glory of Christ hereafter.

For sinners saved by the free grace of God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, will have nothing to glory of in earth or in heaven, but in the Lord alone. It must and will be their song for ever, "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory for ever and ever, *Amen*." "I am persuaded (saith Paul) that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him."

This persuasion ariseth from the Word and Spirit of Christ, he being faithful who hath promised. It is recorded of the Old Testament worthies, who all died in faith, that they saw and were persuaded of the good contained in the promises. They embraced them, and knew that what God had promised, he was able also to perform. Jesus Christ will be faithful to all that trust in him, and he gives his people good grounds for their security.

His word is gone forth, and he hath said to each of them individually, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." His work of grace upon their souls, he will never forsake, but will crown it with eternal glory. His finished work of salvation, binds him to be faithful unto them, because the glory of it would be eclipsed, should he not keep and preserve his people unto the day of his appearing; and then present them faultless before the presence of his Father's glory with exceeding joy, saying, "Lo, I and the children which thou hast given me." Believers are one with Christ, and he must forget him-

self, and forsake himself, when he forgets and forsakes them.

They are the purchase of his blood which he will not disown, but will carefully look to secure and preserve. They are his joy and crown, and will be his rejoicing in the great day of his appearing.

What a great venture doth the soul by believing make? The first act of faith which the Holy Ghost draws forth in and from the soul, is the greatest it ever puts forth. I mean in this respect, and upon this consideration. The soul, at its first believing and trusting its all with Christ, hath nothing in itself to encourage thereto. It hath had no experience of Christ's love, no inward recollection of fellowship with God and the Lamb. All its support—all its inducements and encouragements to believe, arise wholly from without itself; from the person—work—grace and office of Christ as revealed in the word. Yet the Holy Spirit draws the heart to believe—to look at—trust in—rely on, and venture its all—its whole concerns for eternity, with the Lord Jesus Christ. As God hath hung the world upon nothing, but it is solely his own power which sustains it, so it is in this case. We believe, through the mighty power of the Spirit of God, upon the adorable Jesus: and our faith in him, hath no other foundation, or support, but the Lord's naked word. In our after-exercises of faith, having much acquaintance with the Lord, and having had real enjoyment of his love, this serves to encourage us to go on believing. And here, give me leave to ask, sirs! Are

you come to Christ? have you cast your souls upon him? Has there been any real transaction between Christ and you? The Holy Scriptures make believing on the Son of God, a matter of everlasting importance. And what is believing? It is a coming unto Christ. "He that cometh unto me, (saith Christ) I will in nowise cast out." It is a coming to Christ, *to be saved by him*. The best account of it which I can give you is this, which I conceive to be such as will suit the case of the weakest amongst us. Faith then is a coming to God for salvation. It is a coming to God by Christ to be saved. It is a coming to God by Christ for eternal life. Are you sinners? and do you see and feel your sinfulness? Your business then is to go just as you are, with all your sin and misery to Christ. And, as sure as you apply to him, you will find him willing and Almighty to save. Faith is a very simple thing. It is nothing more or less, than putting myself out of my own hands into the hands of Christ; and every encouragement which the Lord himself can give, he hath given us in his most blessed word. Faith is a most wonderful act, it is wholly out of our power to believe, except it be given us from above, and then there is nothing more easy. Poor sinners, how is it with you? To whom, or to what are you looking at for the pardon of your sins, and the salvation of your souls? None can save you but the Immaculate Lamb. Nothing can cleanse you from all sinful defilements, nor your souls from all sin in the sight of God, but the blood of Christ. And it was shed for sinners, even for such as ye are. It

was shed to cleanse and purge poor leprous souls from their filthy and abominable stains. Oh ! that the Eternal Spirit might be pleased most graciously to work on your hearts, and incline and draw your souls to come to Christ the Almighty Saviour. There is no wound which sin has made in your souls, but Christ's blood is a suitable balsam for it. Nor is there any state or case so desperate, but Jesus is perfectly sufficient for it. Oh ! that your sins may not keep you from the Lord, but may it be given you to carry all your sins and corruptions to the ever blessed and most merciful Jesus ; and may you find by blessed experience, that his great work and business and office, is to save, and that to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. The consideration of the eternal Godhead, and glorious perfections of the Lord Jesus, his faithfulness in the discharge of his mediatorial work and office—his care and mindfulness of his people—his interest in them—and their interest in him—serve to be matter of encouragement to such as trust in him, to say for themselves as Paul doth, “ I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.” This brings me,

Thirdly, to observe, for the comfort of believers that their souls which they have cast upon Christ and committed to him, he will keep, and preserve them faultless unto the day of his appearing : believers having cast their persons, the care and concern of their bodies and souls upon Christ, he takes them under his special protection, and from thence

Forward they are, as I conceive, in a very peculiar manner interested in the all-prevailing intercession and advocacy of their great High Priest:—out of which they will never be left, let what may befall them during this mortal life.

The intercession of Christ eternally secures believers, and hath, as I am led to consider the subject, a very particular concern with them, after effectual calling hath taken place in their souls; which I ground upon these words of the Apostle: “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” For them, in a particular and especial manner, who are come unto God by him. So that the advocacy of Christ seems to be entirely on the behalf of such as do believe on him. And he is such an able, skilful, and powerful one, that he never lost a cause, but pleads more powerfully and successfully for his clients, than sin, Satan, or the law, can plead against them. This being the case, there never can be any condemnation in the court of heaven against them; and when they have run their race, finished their generation-work, and are to quit their bodies, they have nothing to fear: for Christ having died for them, sin, *their sin*, is atoned for, death hath lost its sting in the side of Christ, and they die in union with him, who is the resurrection and the life. Believers live as they die, and die as they live. They live in Christ—in union and fellowship with him: and they die in Jesus, in union with, and sometimes in the real enjoyment of fellowship with him in their departing moments:



though this is not always in appearance the case. Some saints, being more favoured with the Lord's refreshing and comforting presence than others ; the dying breath of some of the children of the Most High, leaving a blessed perfume of Jesus behind, whilst others leave no remarkable testimony upon their death-beds of the preciousness of Christ. Yet this is the case of all God's Saints, their deaths are precious in the sight of the Lord, and they are blessed : the Holy Ghost saith, " Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." And we should observe it for our own comfort against the fear of death, that it is not said, Blessed are the rejoicing, triumphant dying saints, who die in the full exercise of faith ; but, " blessed are the dead who *die in the Lord.*" How it may be with you and me, — believers, when we come to die, we cannot say — as it respects our faith and spiritual consolations — . Yet this we know, Jesus will be with us. " *This* God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death." And that he will receive our souls as soon as they are disembodied, and present them without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, into the presence of the Majesty on High.

Every believer will die without any sin imputed to him, or laying on him unpardoned. Every one that belongs to Christ, will die under the blessing of the Eternal Three, in the very arms of Jesus. A dying day is a solemn day both to saints and sinners. If you ask me, in what the solemnity of it consists, as it respects a saint ? I answer, in the soul's personal appearance and introduction into the immediate pre-

sence of God in heaven. But herein consists our blessedness and comfort, our Jesus will himself have the presenting our souls in his own person, before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

Hence the Apostle Jude concludes his epistle with this remarkable and most wonderful doxology—  
“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, *Amen.*” There is nothing in death distressing to a believer, when he looks upon it as conquered by Christ. There is nothing in his personal appearing before God to fill him with dread, when he considers that Christ will have the presenting him. Paul, from the persuasion which he had of Christ’s being able to keep what he had committed to him, cries out in the view and prospect of a violent death, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness :” meaning eternal glory, which he calls a crown of righteousness, because of the splendour and excellency of it, and because the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, is that which gives us a title to it, and a right to enjoy it. But lest any body should think this was the fruit, reward, and wages, of Paul’s prayers, and tears, and ministerial labour—he adds—“Which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them which love his appearing.”

The crown of righteousness, eternal glory, is the gift of God's own free grace, and it belongs unto, and will be bestowed by him, upon all that love and long for his appearing. "I know whom I have believed." Blessed knowledge, to know Christ and him crucified—exalted and crowned in heaven with eternal glory! Paul's blessedness was in Christ, and greatly consisted in the knowledge of him, of whom he saith with the utmost confidence, "and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." What day? the day of death, when he would stand in need of Christ's faithfulness to keep his faith firmly fixed on him, and unshaken in him. It will require great faith for the soul to quit the body, and venture to appear before the Lord, hoping to be found at his tribunal, in the righteousness of Christ alone. And in the day of Christ's appearing to judge the quick and the dead, Paul expected and was persuaded, that he should appear with him, and before him, and be a partaker of the glory and blessedness of the first resurrection. Believers! ye may look forward to the day of death and rejoice, that you have a life which death cannot touch, and that Christ hath swallowed up death in victory. You may look within the vail, and rejoice in the full persuasion that you shall shortly, in your own persons, be actually admitted into it, by Christ himself. You may look to the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, who will change your vile bodies, and make you in body and soul perfectly

holy, spotless, and glorious.—And also to that state of perfect enjoyment and fellowship with him in the heaven of heavens. You may be fully persuaded that he will keep you by his mighty power, through faith unto salvation; and that he will one day shine upon you in all his glory, and give you to see him as he is, and so shall you ever be with the Lord.

May the Lord forgive all the imperfections which have attended the opening of this scripture unto you, and what is his own, may he graciously bless, and to him shall be the praise. *Amen.*

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## SERMON XII.

FREE GRACE TRIUMPHANT, IN THE CONVERSION OF MANASSEH, KING OF JUDAH.

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2 CHRONICLES XXXIII. 12, 13.

*And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers, and prayed unto him : and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.*

THE word of God contains and sets before us the History of the Lord's dealings with men; and in it

are recorded many surprising instances and examples of such as have been made partakers of the rich—free—and sovereign grace of God; whose conversions are recorded and written in the sacred pages, to encourage all that see and feel their need of pardoning, regenerating, and sanctifying grace and mercy, to come to the Lord Jesus Christ for them; and that they, receiving them from him, may give him all the glory. And they are likewise set before us as patterns and monuments of mercy, that we may see what a God of all grace and mercy the Lord God is towards those whom he accepts in the beloved, and whom he beholds in the Son of his love.

In the New Testament, one of the greatest examples mentioned therein of God's free-grace, abounding and super-abounding, in pardoning the chief of sinners, is that of the Thief upon the Cross. And in the Old Testament—the most illustrious and remarkable conversion, and that of the *greatest* sinner mentioned in it, is that of this Manasseh. And my text, as it is taken with a view to set before you the surprising grace of God in this man's conversion and salvation; so the words now before us, naturally lead me to speak of the methods which the Lord was pleased to make use of to effect this. But before I enter upon this subject, it will not be amiss to give you, first, a brief survey and general view of him in his natural, sinful, and unconverted state. And I must here observe, that he was the son of a truly gracious, great, and godly man; who had been in his day and generation, as remarkable for godliness,

and personal holiness, as this his child and successor was for sin.

He was the son of Hezekiah, King of Judah, who came to the throne after the death of Ahaz, that monster of iniquity ; who had departed most grievously from the worship and ordinances of the Lord, and had shut up the doors of the house of God. Hezekiah, upon his accession to the throne, caused them to be opened, and through the grace and blessing of God upon him and his endeavours, he made a thorough reformation in Church and State, established the pure worship and service of the true and living God, and reduced the people, and brought them back again to the observance of it. There were many remarkable instances of the Lord's being with him given, and "he clave unto the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments which the Lord commanded Moses." Manasseh was this king's son. And here I would observe, that grace is not hereditary ; yet it is a blessing, greater than we are apt to conceive, to belong to such as have really and truly an interest in God's covenant of grace ; and it well becomes believers, especially believing parents, to make much use of their interest in God for such as belong to them : it being a truth which holy Watts utters, when he saith, "praying breath was ever spent in vain." No doubt, but Hezekiah had offered up many a prayer to the Lord on the behalf of his son, and earnestly entreated the Lord to convert, renew, and sanctify his soul by the grace of his Holy Spirit ; and though in this he did not live to see his prayers

answered, yet this man, after his decease, was effectually turned to the Lord. As to this Manasseh, his father dying, he, when twelve years of age, came to the throne, to be king—ruler—and governor of the Lord's beloved people. And, though he had seen the piety of his father, received much excellent advice and instruction from him, and cannot by us be supposed to be ignorant of the great reformation which his godly parent and predecessor had made in the land, yet he acts, lives, and follows what was directly contrary to all this. Which serves to discover, what a misery it is for young people to be left to the liberty and freedom of their own wills.

He was a sinner by birth, as we all are, yet when under a religious restraint, he is kept from abundance of evil. He sins against his education-principles, and with an high hand transgresseth against the Lord. He goes beyond, and greatly exceeds his wicked forefathers in sin. He rebuilt the high places, which his own father had caused to be destroyed, and surpassed all that ever went before him in sin and iniquity.

He entirely left off the worship of God, and went on rapidly in worshipping them which by nature were no gods. He worshipped all the host of heaven—the sun—moon—and stars. And, as though he would bid God himself defiance, he not only caused altars to be erected to all the host of heaven, in the two courts of the house of the Lord, and compelled his subjects to commit idolatry—but he had the hellish impudence to set up an idol, a carved image, in the very house of God. He used witchcraft,

dealt with familiar spirits, and with wizards; was an observer of times, and caused his children to pass through the fire to strange, dunghill gods; yea, he shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other, "putting to death the Prophets that reprov'd him and his people for their idolatries, and such as would not comply therewith. And it is commonly said, both by Jewish and Christian writers, that Isaiah was slain, and even sawn asunder by him. (Dr. Gill.)

This is a part, and but the outlines, of what this giant and monster of a sinner was, and of what he did, which leads me to observe how the Lord dwelt with him. Is he left wholly without any remonstrance from heaven, without any threatening or warning of what would befall him, and the state; for his personal and their national impiety? No! God's dealings with sinners are truly wonderful. The Lord sends his servants the Prophets to this man, who reprove him for his sin, warn him from God of his danger—yet he hearkens not; but the more the Prophets speak against his sin, and denounce judgments from the Lord against him and the state, the more he rebels. Wherefore the Lord brought upon him and his people, the captains of the host of the King of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns in a thicket, where, upon his defeat, he had hid himself: (and it served to be a fit emblem to represent the afflictions and troubles his sins had brought him into) and the captains of the host of the King of Assyria bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And here, when out of his



own land, and a captive in prison, he is brought to feel his guilt, acknowledge his sin, and to seek most earnestly unto the Lord God for his pardoning grace and mercy.

“And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him : and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.”

The methods which the Lord used to bring this man to see and feel his sinful state, and his need and necessity of returning unto the Lord with all his heart, are in these words beautifully set before us. God brings this sinner into a state of distress and affliction, and by this means leads him to see that the true cause of all his affliction was his sin which he had committed. “Afflictions come not forth of the dust, nor does trouble spring out of the ground.” God sends affliction and lays it upon us ; and times of affliction are, and ought to be, times of serious consideration, and many times the Lord makes use of it to bring sinners to himself. Not that afflictions in themselves, simply considered, would effect this ; but God, by his dispensations with us, and especially by his correcting ones, embitters to us the joys of sense, and makes the soul sensible of its need of more real and substantial good and happiness, than this world can either give, or take away.

Many a sinner, through afflictions, sanctified by the Spirit of God, have been brought to seek the

Lord. Manasseh was. He did not, he would not seek to Jehovah, the everlasting Rock of Ages, in his prosperity. But in a dungeon, when in prison, when deprived of creature-comforts, when under the heavy hand of God for sin, how is he altered from his former self! He now feels the bitterness of sin. And his prison, and affliction, are sanctified, and are to him a real blessing. He considers his ways; reflects upon his past life; sees himself to be deserving of every evil which could possibly befall him in earth or hell. And his mouth is stopped, and he puts his mouth in the dust, "if so be, there may be hope," and is ready to say, "Wherefore should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Any misery short of hell being an infinite mercy. Afflictions are God's messengers, sent to dispose our minds for solemn and serious reflections upon our past lives, and they are great blessings when they are sanctified. "And when Manasseh was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God." But will God have regard to the prayer of such a sinner as he hath been? Yes! So true it is, that, at what time soever it shall be given to a sinner to repent of his sin, and return to the Lord, his soul shall be saved, and his sin purged and forgiven. In affliction, Manasseh was brought to know himself to be a sinner, to feel the guilt, and see the curse hanging over his guilty head for his transgressions. All within him he sees and feels to be sin and misery, and being led to know from the word, that with the Lord there is mercy, he betakes himself unto the Lord, whom he is now brought to acknowledge to

be his God. And from some blessed discovery of mercy, he humbles himself greatly before the God of his fathers. In all which we may see, perceive, and trace, the real actings of grace in the heart of a true penitent.

The first work of God upon the soul, is to discover and convince of sin. This creates distress in the heart, and fills the mind with grief. The quickened soul, being in spiritual affliction and distress, flies to the Lord alone, entreats the Lord for pardon and grace, and humbles himself greatly, as this man did, before the God of his fathers. Sin, when made known to the soul in its guilt—filth and demerit—by the Holy Ghost, humbles the sinner under the mighty hand of God. And it leads the repenting sinner to confess his sins before the Lord, to humble himself greatly before the Majesty of heaven and earth, and to acknowledge himself justly deserving of the damnation of hell; and that it is wholly owing to the Lord's mercies, that he hath not been long ago consumed.

View this distressed sinner, Manasseh, he is now sick of the pleasures of sin, he can scarce lift up his eyes to heaven—his heart bleeds at the remembrance of his former iniquities; the remembrance of them is grievous; he feels the burden of them to be intolerable, and he humbles himself greatly before the God of his fathers, confessing them, bewailing and mourning on account of them. The discovery of sin which he had, the sorrows which he felt, the hatred and indignation wrought in his soul against himself for sin were great. He would now have preferred it, to

be in hell without sin, rather than to live in the commission of one sin. He is now melted down by divine grace, and his cry is, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" and he prayed unto the Lord. He could live without God and worship, without prayer and divine ordinances before; but the Spirit of Life from God having entered into him, it may be said of him, as it was of Saul, when converted, "Behold he prayeth." And it was prayer indeed. He felt his distress, he saw his need, and he calls out of the depth of that distress into which he was brought unto the Lord. We never pray better than in great distress. And his prayer came up into God's dwelling-place, even into heaven. A fresh proof was given, that the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart he will not despise; "and he was entreated of him and heard his supplication." Oh! what bowels of mercy are there in our God! and how wonderfully does he manifest his mercy to poor, distressed, praying sinners, when they are greatly distressed, and brought very low! And the Lord brought him out of prison, and out of Babylon, and brought him again to Jerusalem his own city, restored him to the throne, and kingly honour and dignity. "Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God."

Being thus visited and renewed by the grace of God, a partaker of pardoning mercy, and a new creature in Christ Jesus, brought back again to sit upon his throne, and to exercise his kingly power and authority, he acts as a truly converted man; he

prohibits idolatry, endeavours to restore and observe the true worship of God; and as he knew that the Lord Jehovah was God alone, he professeth his faith in him, and endeavours to walk humbly before him. And thus having given you a brief view of the man, and of the Lord's dealings with him, I would go on, and proceed to observe more particularly, the freeness of the grace of God, its divine sovereignty, and how it triumphs over all sin, conquers all opposition, and reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We here see that sin is no bar to God's pardoning mercy, and that sin cannot hinder the Lord from working upon a soul. And when it is thus affirmed, there is no kind of encouragement given to any sinner to continue in sin, that grace may abound. God forbid! Nothing manifests more ignorance than the saying, that the discovering, and freely and fully publishing the riches of God's grace in the pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, will be an incentive to move sinners, either to continue in it, or to make light of it. No, sirs! this cannot be the case. Our God is a Sovereign; and to shew his sovereignty, and to manifest his holiness, justice, and hatred to sin, he hath sent some of the least of sinners, as you are apt to think and call them, to hell, there to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire: while, on the other hand, it hath been his holy will and pleasure, to break forth towards and upon some of the first and chief-rate sinners, in a way of grace; and his mercy hath borne down all before it, conquered the

sinner, and made him a monument of surprising grace! This is to be proved from the instance and case before us. Where shall we find a greater sinner?—his soul dead—his heart as hard as flint and an adamant, he can stand out against God's threatenings—but grace—almighty—invincible grace, is too much for him; he cannot resist it—he is conquered by it—and he is saved, and yet must confess and acknowledge, that it is not of him that runneth, nor of him that willeth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

What could this man's conversion and salvation be owing to, but the good pleasure of Jehovah's will? Where could he find cleansing for his sin, and healing for his spiritual wounds, but in the blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth from all sin? What could he trust his soul upon before the Lord, but in the everlasting robe of Christ's righteousness? What, or who, could quicken his dead soul, and raise him from the grave of sin, but the Lord the Spirit, who is the Lord and Giver of Spiritual Life? Grace, sirs! hath great glory from great sinners, when they are converted and turned unto the Lord. And where could such a sinner as Manasseh turn himself for support, refuge and succour, when quickened and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, to see, feel, and experience his misery?

Nothing in himself could encourage him; nothing which he felt could comfort him; all that he experienced served to drive him out of self, to unbottom him from self; and nothing could be a sup-

port to him, but the name of the Lord, which is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe. It was not the holiness of God, the justice of God, nor any of the moral attributes of Deity, could be a support to his guilty mind. No, nothing short of that declaration, "The Lord God, gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness, and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, could be a rock of support and refuge for his sinful, dejected, and humbled soul. Sirs! What think you of this monument of mercy which the great God here sets before you? Here is a sinner, as black with sin as hell itself—as sinful as the devil could wish him to be—one whose sins, without an hyperbole, might be said to be as innumerable as the stars in God's firmament, and as heavy as the sands on the sea-shore—and yet—behold! God's mercy exceeds Manasseh's sins, and pardons all his transgressions.—The blood of the Son of God purifieth and cleanseth him from every spot and stain of iniquity, and being clothed with the righteousness of Immanuel, he is admitted to sing in heaven to the honour of the Lamb that was slain "Thou art worthy." "Salvation to God and the Lamb." You see sin is no bar nor hinderance to the Lord, but he will put forth his Almighty power, when, and upon whom, he pleaseth, and he will make them new creatures by his grace. This should teach us to despise no sinner, for out of such God maketh Saints; so free is grace, God calleth whom he will. It is not by works of righteousness which

we have done, or can do, but according to his mercy he saveth us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

The turning and converting sinners, from sin, self, and the world, to Christ, is one of the chiefest works of God; it is the greatest which he performs upon earth, and it is one of the chiefest ways of God, in which he makes known himself to be the God of Grace and Mercy—a God, loving righteousness, and hating iniquity.

As here is an instance of God's astonishing grace, so let us observe what grace hath done in this man's soul. He now mourns for sins committed by him against the Lord—humbles himself greatly before a sin-pardoning God, and prays to him for grace, and for a spiritual supply of all his needs. Here then is one fruit of true conversion unto God, prayer. It is true, there is something like prayer found in some who are made to appear to be vessels of mercy, before their conversion. (As it was with Colonel Gardiner, who, before his conversion, being in a storm and in danger, cried unto the Lord in prayer, though all this was chiefly owing to the Godly instructions he had repeatedly received from his pious mother and aunt.) But, in conversion, the Spirit of grace and supplication is bestowed, and all God's regenerated children, are a praying people. For prayer is the breath of the new-born soul. It is true all God's children are still-born in their first birth, but they are all born into the spiritual world, crying out after God. You have Manasseh turned from sin, to the Lord, and amending his life according to



God's holy word. So that, you see, when God puts forth his power, and manifests his grace and mercy, giant sinners are overcome and changed into Saints. "The stoutest sinner must resign at his all-conquering word." We may well cry out, O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever and ever, *Amen*. You see from this instance of God's free and sovereign grace, that when the Lord God puts forth his power, and manifests his love, the stoutest sinner is as easily conquered as any; and we may observe that no sin, nor sinner, can stand out—when free grace, like a mighty torrent, breaks forth in conversion—then God's love warms the heart, and God's covenant-mercy, which reaches from everlasting to everlasting, bears down all before it, and is found to be "more than a match for the heart, which wonders to feel its own hardness depart." There was a man, who had been living in sin all his days, and for his crimes he was condemned to die. The man was brought to the place of execution, and appeared to be an impenitent sinner—his soul was just about to launch into eternity, and the flames of hell seemed to be kindling about his ears—when—Be astonished O ye heavens at it!—and ye, O sons of men, "shout and gaze, and cast your crowns" before the throne of grace for it!—The Lord Jesus Christ looked upon the poor dying sinner—and looked upon him with everlasting compassion! The man's heart is effectually changed, his soul divinely quickened, and he

falls preaching to his fellow thief—acknowledges how justly he suffers for his crimes—and the suffering Saviour having looked upon him, he looks to him as the atoneing—bleeding, and dying Lamb of God, for eternal life and salvation. “Lord,” saith he, “remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom; and Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” It was indeed the coronation day—when our adorable High Priest had the Cross for his pulpit—and his sacred head was crowned with thorns—and he hanging between two sinners to testify that he was a Saviour. And here the bowels of his mercy and compassion melt down and dissolve the heart of a stony, rebellious, stubborn sinner—and he proves himself to be Lord God omnipotent—Jehovah—the self-existent Saviour, and that, though nailed to the Cross—yet he had the keys of death and hell. He takes this criminal from the Cross, to Paradise, that an everlasting proof and evidence might be given, of his being able to save to the uttermost. I must tell you, that the faith of this converted dying Thief was most truly wonderful, and it seems to be the greatest ever put forth. But it was on a remarkable occasion, It was a day of Christ’s power—when he bruised—eternally bruised, the old serpent, called the Devil—put away sin in its guilt and filth from before the Lord, by his offering of himself—and, before he cried out, It is finished—he gave an undeniable proof of the everlasting virtue and cleansing efficacy of his most precious blood. And as kings on their corona-

tion days, delight in bestowing their favours, and in shewing their mercy and clemency—So the King of kings—on that remarkable day, when he was wading through a sea of blood to a kingdom of glory, acted in this remarkable manner—for which he will be praised, admired, and loved throughout eternity. It was the day of his espousals, and the day of the gladness of his heart, and here he delivered the prey out of the clutches of the devil, and out of the very jaws of hell. I must tell you, Jesus Christ, though he has changed the Cross for heaven, and his crown of thorns for a crown of glory—yet he is not changed in his mercy, grace, and compassion towards poor sinners. And, as he drew the heart of the Thief by the cords of his dying love, so he still continues to draw the hearts of poor sinners after him, by the same love. And here I must observe, that as the word of God, known and understood, is an eternal bar to prevent despair, so the chief and highest instance of Sovereign grace recorded in it, as this before us, is a bulwark against presumption. Here are two sinners hanging on a Cross—equally and alike brethren in iniquity—Christ looks upon the one, and leaves the other to perish in his sins and for them. And here it may be proper for me to introduce it ; and if you misconstrue it, your blood will be on your own heads—as God’s elect fell in Adam into a state of sin and guilt—so it pleaseth God to leave some of them for a considerable season in this state, before he breaks forth in the expressions of his love and grace towards them.

He illustrates, magnifies, and exalts his grace in renewing, converting, and bringing his people to the saving knowledge of himself. The time—place—means—and every thing relative to the quickening his people and raising them from the grave of sin, are all fixed upon by him. Some are called sooner, some later—but all the redeemed are effectually called. I must also tell you, God's people are not known by us until they are made new creatures. All of them are born into this world in a state of sin, and in the kingdom of Satan, and they only pass out of the one state into the other by regeneration. Verily, verily, I say unto you, saith Christ himself, except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. The state we are brought into by the first man's disobedience, is a state of spiritual death, and dying in it, we are damned eternally. The curse of God is upon all that live and die in a state of nature. And here, give me leave to address myself very plainly, impartially, and particularly unto each and every one of you, and intreat you to consider with yourselves, and to examine what the state and condition is, in which you are. I must inform you from the Lord, that you are sinners—entirely ruined and undone—the law of God condemns you—the justice of God pronounces an eternal curse upon all the transgressors of it—and there is no court in which you can make any appeal, but the court of free grace—and as that court is set open; you are welcome, sinful, miserable, hell-deserving as you are, to come into it and plead with God for

the life of your souls, and pardon of your sins : and your plea will be admitted, through the intercession of Jesus, the High Priest, over the house of God. Sin is the greatest of all evils, and one of its principal effects upon the sinner is, that it blinds the eyes, and hardens the heart against God. And, when a poor creature is brought to feel his guilt, then he is apt to fly from the Lord.

Though it be an everlasting truth, that none will ever come to Christ until they feel themselves to be dead, and liable to be eternally damned for their sins—yet it is equally as true that sin, simply known and considered, would drive us from, instead of driving us to Jesus. The chiefest misery in sin lies in the guilt of it, which it hath brought upon the conscience, and therefore, when by the light of the Holy Spirit—the guilt of it is apprehended, and the law of God stirs up a sense of divine wrath in the mind, the sinner is either for striving to obtain God's mercy upon the footing of his own performances, or else is inclined to despair of mercy. It is the sole prerogative of God the Holy Ghost, to draw the sinner to the Saviour, and this he does by taking of the things of Christ, and shewing them unto the poor trembling creature. And, by the discoveries which he gives of Christ, and his great and precious salvation—the soul is divinely encouraged to come to, and venture upon Christ wholly and entirely. Our Lord, speaking of the Spirit, says, when he is come, He shall take of the things of mine, and shall shew them unto you. And when

we have a sight of Christ, in the light of the Spirit, we see his blood to be sufficient to cleanse us from all our sins—his righteousness perfectly sufficient to justify us before the throne of God—and the love of his heart and the bowels of his mercy—melt down our souls, so that we cry out, “Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.” There is nothing in the word of God, but encouragement upon encouragement to all that feel their want of Christ, to betake themselves to him, and make him their refuge and sanctuary. And, blessed is the soul, unto whom it is given to flee to Jesus for pardon and salvation. As soon as ever a poor creature is brought to believe in the everlasting virtue of the blood of the Lamb to cleanse him from all his sins, he enjoys a sense of pardoning mercy. For God’s forgiving grace in the remission of sin, is enjoyed in the soul by believing in Jesus. And, of all mercies, pardoning mercy is the chiefest, in the view of a broken-hearted sinner. He admires, adores, and praises God for it, as one of the greatest blessings of grace. A pardoned sinner is a blessed person, and is in a blessed state. The Holy Ghost saith, “Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” And, if you ask me, Who they are to whom the Lord will not impute sin? I answer, they are such to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works. Having imputed the sins of his people to Christ, he imputes the righteousness of Christ unto them, and his blood hides all

their transgressions from view. There was a sinner quickened and convinced of his sins by the Spirit of God, and brought to see his need of going to Christ for pardon, and he, when under the mighty hand of God, clearly saw his heinous guilt and sinfulness, and thought his sins would try the mercies of God, and almost exhaust them. However, being pressed and greatly burdened in his soul with sin, he came to Christ for grace to pardon all his sin. And when he had made a trial of Christ, he was astonished, and even overwhelmed with holy wonder and surprise. He cries out as one lost, and overcome with a view of the infinite riches of grace! "And the grace of our Lord (saith Paul) was exceeding abundant, with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus." Paul thought his sins were almost sufficient to exhaust the grace of God. But, when he came to make a trial of it, he found that it flowed forth from God as from an inexhaustible fountain; and that it was more than the Apostle knew what to do withal. It exceeded, and over exceeded all his sins and misery; and therefore, from what he knew of it, he adds, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

Sirs! Jesus Christ is still the same. His mercies are boundless, and exceed all expression and conception.

And you are as welcome, if God the Spirit make you willing, to come to Christ for the pardon of all your sins, and for the robe of his righteousness, as

ever sinners were. There is no exception made against your coming to Christ in the Gospel, let your sins be what they may. For the Lord himself hath spoken it, "All manner of sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme." Oh, that God the Holy Ghost may preach this to your hearts, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. It will be your mercy if you are enabled, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to betake yourselves to Jesus.

May the declarations of his grace, and the word of promise encourage you, He hath said, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out."

And now, I leave what hath been delivered, praying God the Spirit to bless it to your souls,  
*Amen.*



## SERMON XIII.

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OUR LORD REBUKES PETER FOR HIS LITTLE FAITH.

ST. MATTHEW XIV. 30, 31.

*But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid ; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ?*

**I**N our reading the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament, which give us an account of the incarnation of the essential and only-begotten Son of God—of the transcendent holiness of the human nature of Christ, the holy one of God—of his spotless life—miracles and actions—it is comfortable to consider, that in the relation which the Holy Ghost gives us of the Apostles, Disciples, and true followers of Christ—he is graciously pleased to represent them as men of like passions with ourselves—even the subjects of natural, legal, and sinful fears and infirmities, which broke forth and were discovered upon various occasions.

In the chapter before us, the compassion of our Lord towards the multitude which followed Him, and his working a miracle in multiplying five barley loaves, and two small fishes, and feeding them therewith to their content and satiety, are recorded. Above five thousand men, besides women and children, were thus miraculously supplied, and what remained of the fragments filled twelve baskets. The whole of which action of Christ, had a great and strange effect upon the spectators, and witnesses of it. According to what John hath recorded of it in the 6th chapter of his Gospel, they cried out with surprise—"This is of a truth, that Prophet that should come into the world."

Pleased therefore with this action of our Lord, they would fain acknowledge him as their King, declaring him to be the King *Messiah*, and place him as their Head, and deliverer from the Roman yoke, and set up a temporal kingdom, in which they might hope for great secular advantages.

Our Lord, whose kingdom is of a spiritual nature, and which cometh not with observation, who avoided, at all times, all outward pomp and ostentation, knowing the design of the multitude, and perceiving how much his own true followers were inclined to fall in with such a proposal, constrained his Disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him to the other side of the Lake of *Tiberias*, or *Sea of Galilee*, over against *Bethsaida*, to *Capernaum*, "while he sent the multitude away:" which having done, and departing himself into a mountain to pray, where he continued the greatest part of the night, pouring out

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his soul in prayer to his heavenly Father ; his Disciples being in a ship, upon the sea, sailing towards Capernaum, which city lay over against Bethsaida ; it being now dark, and they in the midst of the sea, five and twenty, or thirty furlongs from land, the sea rose, swelled and was tumultuous, by reason of a great wind which blew, and the ship was by this means tossed to and fro ; so that they were in the utmost danger of their lives : all which may be thus accommodated and explained. The ship may be considered as an emblem of the Church of Christ, and of its state and circumstances in this present world—which may be compared to the sea for its fickleness, inconstancy, and tumultuousness.

Over the sea of this troublesome world, the ship, Christ's Church is to sail, and is exposed to storms and tempests. Christ is the pilot of it, and the port she is bound for, is heaven and eternal glory. The fears of the Disciples, no doubt, were great, their Lord not being with them. He had been engaged in praying for them, and was about to give them fresh proof of his eternal power and Godhead, which would be to their most seasonable relief, comfort, and joy. " And, in the fourth watch of the night," probably says Dr. Gill, after 3 o'clock in the morning, Christ came to his Disciples, from the mountain where he had been praying the greatest part of the night, he descended to the sea side, and so upon the water, walking on the waves of the sea. An invincible evidence of his being Lord, God, Almighty, of whom Job speaks thus, " Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the

waves of the sea." The sight which they in the ship had of Christ, as treading, walking, and passing on the waves of the sea, filled them with a tremour. "And when the Disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a Spirit, and they cried out for fear." As persons in the utmost consternation, in the greatest danger, and want of help, fearing and suspecting that he was a Spirit; some nocturnal apparition in an human form. And they might be led to such thoughts, seeing Christ would have passed by them, according to Mark's account, which appeared from the course he steered, the swiftness of his motion, and his seeming negligence of them.

"But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid." And Peter, as he knew Christ's voice, ventured to speak, saying, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water; and he said, Come." Upon which Peter descended from the ship and walked on the water, being supported by the power of Christ, to go to him: which was proof of his love to Christ, and of his faith in his omnipotent word and power. "But, when he saw the wind boisterous," the wind blowing hard against him, and the waves beating with great violence upon him, "he was afraid." Such was the weakness and imperfection of his faith; "and beginning to sink, he cried," with great eagerness and importunity, "Lord, save me." "And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they

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were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship, came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." And, having willingly received him into the ship, and acknowledged his essential power and divinity, immediately the ship was at the land whither they went, John vi. 21; which was by a divine motion. The wind ceased, and another miracle was wrought, the ship was in an instant at the place whither they intended to go.

In treating upon, and explaining the words of my text, I will aim at, and endeavour to observe the following things:—

First, I will point out Peter's love to, and faith in Christ, though accompanied with its weakness, infirmities, and imperfections; drawing observations and inferences herefrom, suited to the general case and experience of the children and people of God.

Secondly, I will speak of our Lord's immediate readiness to help, save, and succour his servants; drawing encouragements herefrom, to comfort our hearts with.

Thirdly, the rebuke given by Christ to Peter, for the weakness and infirmity of faith; which will lead to view our Lord's displeasure and resentment at the unbelief which his dear people too often fall into, and nourish and encourage in themselves; and his love in his rebuke. I am, in the

First head of this discourse, to speak of Peter's love to, and faith in Christ, though accompanied with its weakness, infirmities, and imperfections; drawing observations and inferences herefrom, suited

to the general case and experience of the children of God. The love which Peter bore to Jesus, and which was nothing more or less than the reflection of Christ's love to him, and upon him, was cordial, sincere, and vehement. It was the fruit and effect, and the evidence of his faith in his divine Lord ; and which I here place before faith, though it be the fruit of it, it being exceeding difficult to say, which breaks forth, and makes its appearance in the soul born of God, so as to be first apprehended by us. True faith in Christ, and unfeigned love to him, go hand in hand. There cannot be the one without the other. Yet the one is more easily discovered to us, than the other. As for instance:—Love to Christ is ready to break forth upon all occasions : in thinking over his love—the wonders and mysteries contained in it. When others speak of Christ, it serves to warm the affections, and draw forth fresh desires after him. It causes the heart to burn with vehement desires to enjoy him, as the one great and supremely beloved object of love—pleasure—and delight :—saying, “ Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is nothing, none upon earth that I desire besides thee.” As it thus breaks forth upon all occasions, even so at the lowest ebb ; when under the greatest discouragements, the truly gracious soul can say and feel the truth of it in his own soul, that he loves those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth ; and desires for himself to love Christ above all visible and invisible : so that it is more clearly perceived than faith in its acts is.

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Peter's love appeared in the instance before us. Hearing and knowing the voice of Christ, he is willing to go to his beloved Saviour; "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." True love cannot bear any long absence from its beloved object. Difficulties vanish before it. Peter is willing to trust in the Almighty power of the Lord, and walks upon the water to go to him. Jesus Christ, who loves his people, and the very weakest expressions—of their love to him, tries his beloved Peter's love to, and faith in him, by saying, *Come*;—which word like fire melted and inflamed the Apostle's affection to his Lord, so that he came down out of the ship, and walked on the water to go to Jesus; which was altogether owing to Christ's power, who upheld Peter's faith.

Yet his faith was not perfect and complete, as it respects the acts of it. The wind blowing, the waves beating and tossing, and he sinking, cried out, "Lord, save me;" which words discovered his faith in his divine Lord, whom he knew to be Almighty and All-sufficient; so that in him we have an instance of true love to, and unfeigned faith in the Lord and Saviour; though at the same time accompanied with weakness, infirmities, and imperfections; which indeed is the general case and experience of the children of God, and in this sense, and under this view of it, there is something lacking in their faith. It is not yet complete in every act and instance of it.

In further prosecuting this subject, I would ob-

serve, that *fear* is, properly speaking, an uneasiness of mind which arises from the apprehension of some impending evil, and as spiritually taken, is of two kinds—legal, and evangelical.

As it respects the fears of God's converted and BELOVED ONES, they are many; but as it respects their souls, may be reduced to the following heads:—

First, they have at times their doubts and fears respecting the love of Christ towards them, which arise from the inward sight, perception, and feeling they have of their own inward sinfulness, corruption and impurity. “The heart knoweth its own bitterness.” Every enlightened person knows and feels for himself the plague of his own heart, the total corruption of all the faculties of his soul, and the members of his body, and is apt to conclude, that none feels what he does. He thinks, it may be, at times, that God hath shut up his loving-kindness, and will withdraw all manifestation of it from him. Just as Asaph did when he said, “Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more?” And if they are deserted, and without the shinings of Christ upon them, they, with the same man of God, are ready to say, “Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? hath God forgotten to be gracious?” Herein the weakness of their faith is discovered; we are all too apt to mix something with our faith. We seldom clearly discern that true faith springs from the word of Christ, is exercised upon the work of Christ, and should triumph in him, and in him alone, because of his word of promise, which is at all times the same.



Weak believers are, sometimes, ready to doubt they are not of the number of God's elect, nor the called according to his purpose, because they cannot give so clearly, and state so circumstantially, an account of the Lord's work on their souls—of the means and methods God was pleased to make use of to bring them home to himself, as some can and do. But, are such truly desirous, do they heartily pray to experience the efficacy of electing, everlasting love in their own hearts? and to be feelingly interested in spiritual blessings? Such cannot have a better evidence of their election, redemption, nor sanctification.

Sometimes, the Lord's people fear that they are not truly converted, finding how prone their wills are to rebel against God, and how deceitful and desperately wicked their hearts are. They think and fear their spot is not the spot of his children. Though spiritual distresses and misgivings of heart, which make up a part of the experience of the people of God, are far from being pleasing and comfortable, yet they are truly profitable. And, by the divine wisdom, grace, and economy of the Holy Spirit, they tend to further the believer in his way heaven-wards, as they serve to make him sensible of his inherent sinfulness, weakness, wants, and miseries; to make him more watchful and circumspect; and they cause him to breathe more fervently after Christ and his salvation.

Such fears, as I have briefly recited, with many more which the Lord's people have and do experience, spring from various causes; some, arising from

bodily constitution ; others, from want of more clear knowledge of the salvation of Christ, which is free, full, and everlastingly complete—and which, at times, are caused by soul desertion—spiritual conflicts, and the temptations of Satan :—though they are so many evidences of our faith's being, when thus attacked, weak and small ; so that our infirmities are thus discovered hereby, yet they likewise serve to prove our real love and attachment to Christ Jesus.

For, if He was not truly precious to the soul, and truly desired by the soul, the believer would not have those fears and thoughts about distance between Christ and him.

It is the effect of love, to produce a kind of jealousy, and it is the fruit of love to Christ. The soul will be jealous and suspicious of its having been the cause, through some sinful inadvertency, or spiritual miscarriage, of making his BELOVED to depart and withdraw his presence from him. Hence he will cry out, “ *Lord, save me.*” This prayer came from *Peter's* heart, was suggested to him by the Holy Spirit, and spoke by him in a view of the danger he was in, and addressed to Him who alone could save him. This, *Lord, save me*, is a short prayer, but quite full, suitable and necessary to his exigence. “ *Lord, save me.*” It is a suitable request upon various occasions, for believers to make to Christ their Lord. Under their various trials and temptations, when their faith is at any time peculiarly tried and assaulted, it is a seasonable prayer, “ *Lord, save me.*” But do they need salvation ? are they not saved already ? They are indeed, as one with

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Christ; considered as ingrafted into *Him*, and as made one Spirit with the Lord—saved in him completely with an everlasting salvation. And as founded upon this Rock of Ages, they shall not be—ashamed, nor confounded, world without end. In—Him they are saved, and washed from every spot and—stain, both of original and actual corruption, before—the Lord; for his blood cleanseth them from all sin—  
—and his righteousness delivereth them from ever—lasting death.

But this great salvation being revealed and ap—plied unto them by the Holy Spirit to their hearts, as it is the great motive of setting out to walk with God; so the fellowship they have hereby with the Father and the Son, keeps them going on from faith to faith, and from strength to strength, till they receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.

In their walking with God, they find their old corrupt nature averse to it, and many things to put them out of the blessed and delightful path of holy converse and intercourse with the Lord, and on these accounts have reason to cry out, “Lord, save me.” But, in particular, as it respects remarkable seasons in their souls, cases, and experiences, when they need thus to pray, take the following account: There are seasons when real believers feel the body of sin and death working powerfully within them; and there are cases which befall them, in which, though it be to the grief of their souls, they have to say, “Iniquities prevail against us.” The Apostle’s experience being their own, who said, “I find a law

in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Which fetches up some doleful groans, and causes them to utter some sorrowful exclamations against themselves; and when thus exercised, by the power, influence and prevalency of in-dwelling sin, they have cause to pray, *Lord, save me.* Lord, save us, from ourselves, from the influence of our sinful lusts and corruptions—from the strength of temptations—and the power of Satan.

Another special reason for such a prayer is, when believers feel and find they cannot pray. I suppose few, if any of the Lord's people, fail to find the following description of a peculiar case in experience to be their own. There are, I conceive, such cases and circumstances befall the real children of the Most High, as to be dead in their spiritual frames, shut up in their souls, so as that, at least to their own sense and view, they cannot pray; nor express their wants at the throne. All is dark within, and no comfort is vouchsafed from the Lord unto them, in a way of spiritual apprehension, so that, though they come to God, and bow before his footstool, they have not a right view of their wants—they have no words to express their case, but seem to be left wholly and altogether to themselves. Such a season makes way for this cry—"Lord, save me." It comes from their inmost souls, and has more of the true spirit of prayer in it, than they can at such times conceive. Sirs, true, spiritual, inwrought prayer, is a mystery. We think, if we are at any time in such a case as I have

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described, we are in a most wretched state indeed. But we never pray better, than under such frames, and in such circumstances. I grant, neither of us are easily led to believe and acknowledge this, and it will require some attention to discover the truth of it. But, sirs, what are your inward groanings at such times? Do you not value the favour of God and account the least manifestation of it to you a guilty soul, above ten thousands of gold and silver? Do you not at such seasons see, that all things below Christ, and without Him, are nothing worth? Do ye not loath yourselves for your spiritual deformities? And, are ye not, at such times, taught experimentally the truth of what Christ hath said, "Without me ye can do nothing?" It is in such cases the Spirit maketh intercession for us and in us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. We think we pray best, when we are most enlarged. It is quite easy for us to express ourselves in prayer when in public, freely, and clearly; and though it be the fruit of our gift in prayer, yet it is no evidence of what we really are in prayer. This is best discovered when we converse with God in and by private prayer and ejaculation.

Here our grace will be discovered, and we shall find in our souls that we often pray best, when we speak least. For sighs, groanings, and inward desires, and breathings after God, are the true *elixir*, and spirit of prayer; which consists in an access unto, and intercourse with our heavenly Father—by faith in our divine Mediator, through the influence of the Holy Spirit; by whom the Lord of Hosts is sanc-

tified in our hearts, by letting in upon our minds, apprehensions of his glorious perfections—of his rich grace, and his acceptance of us in Christ Jesus. So that we may conclude with saying, that every part of genuine experience tends to one point, to bring the believer to renounce himself in every respect, to be nothing in his own ends and aims, and to believe more steadfastly—depend more constantly—and receive and embrace more cordially the Lord Jesus Christ, as made of God to him, wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.

I proceed, secondly, to speak of our Lord's immediate readiness to help, save, and succour his servant, drawing encouragements herefrom to comfort our hearts.

*Peter* no sooner cried out, *Lord, save me*, but immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and relieved him, by delivering him out of all his trouble, and by removing from him all cause of fear. Just so, in like manner, our Lord deals with all his dearly BELOVED ONES.

Their distresses make way for the administration of his cordials—their sinkings for his succour and support—their fears for the applications of his rich grace and promise—their castings down for his lifting them up—and setting them on high. Our Lord withdrew his power, and suffered *Peter's* faith, in the case before us, to fail, to illustrate his grace and compassion so much the more—to teach him and us, that he puts forth ten thousand acts of grace within us, which our faith discerns not—to shew us that our faith is in itself not to be depended on—

that there is no strength in it—that it is supported by himself alone, who is both the *Author and finisher of it*. He implants it—secretly maintains it—marvellously draws it forth, and sometimes imperceptibly increases, strengthens and nourishes it—and at seasons engages it most divinely and sweetly upon himself—by which means the believer is divinely attracted with the beauties—excellencies—glories—fulness—fitness — salvation — grace—and mercy of our Lord. Sights and discoveries of whom, draw sweetly and powerfully the soul into some living acts, of real spiritual communion with him, which is the greatest blessing, next to heaven, we can possibly have, or enjoy. I would wish, speaking on this, to set my own view of this grand subject of communion with Christ (which all Saints confess to be their hearts' desire and prayer to God, that they may have the increasing enjoyment of it more and more) in a clear point of view.

I am speaking of actual communion between Christ and the soul, as really perceived and enjoyed by faith; and in which, we are both passive and active. As it respects this communion on the part of Christ, it is thus effected by him. He lets into the mind some beams of his own light, makes himself present to the believer, who takes in, through Christ's own light which shines in upon him, some spiritual views and conceptions of his glorious majesty—person and work. This draws the soul forth into some actual converse with his most precious Saviour—which breaks forth in the exercise of his faith and love to him.

Which acts of faith and love, thus put forth, under the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost—he revealing Christ to the soul, may be styled, the Believer's communion Acts, in the exercise of his faith and love to him, and those acts of faith and love are immediately engaged with, and exercised on the person, and salvation of our Lord. In the exercise of which, the believer may be said to be active. The presence of Jesus Christ is felt influentially, as arising from him the object, and by this means our acts of faith are most divinely drawn forth towards him as our ALL in ALL. I hope this will sufficiently prove, that our communion with Christ, is both active and passive: that Christ shining in his own glory upon our minds, irradiating us with the bright beams of his own light; we, by faith, as passive in this matter, take in such discoveries of him as lead to some active and lively communion with him. But, to pass on, our Lord, who is one with his people, whose love towards them passeth knowledge, which admits of no change, but is immutable and invincible, is, and will be every moment, in every instance, and upon all occasions venting it, and bestowing some fruit and blessing of it, on those who fear him. He delights in the manifestation and expressions of his love to them, for he rejoices over them to do them good. Hence, it may be, ye who love him in sincerity and truth, have been, and will be exercised in a peculiar way, and with peculiar exercises. It may be, ye think that all the manifestations of Christ's love, lie in comfort and consolation: it will in the issue be eventually so. But



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his channels, cut out by him to manifest his real love to you, as to some of them, are, what you call, your greatest crosses, your deepest afflictions, and soul distresses. For, am I not now speaking to some, who have had great knowledge of Christ's love in this way and by these means? Have you not been at your wit's end, troubled, perplexed, and cast down, because the Lord suspended his heart-reviving presence, and the consolations of his love from you? and yet, under all this, have ye not had that pouring out your hearts before the Lord, and been kept by his strong hand depending on his faithful word, saying, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee:" "I will praise God because of his word?" And is not this to be looked on, and interpreted by you, as really an evidence; yea, as real a manifestation of God's love as can be?

Again, have ye not in waiting upon the Lord, when things have been exceeding low with you in experience, as respected *your* sense and feeling, had such words as these brought home and applied by the Holy Spirit to your souls? "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness, will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." And what is this but the voice of Christ? yea, a choice expression and evidence of his love? If your experience is like mine, I have found in such means as are now related, a real growth of faith, real fellowship with Christ in his love, without sensible joy.

And I would heartily recommend it to each, and all of you, who take delight in approaching unto God, to mark your own frames and spirits in secret prayer, and God's dealings then with you. As prayer, when it is truly what it should be, is a conversing with the Lord, so it pleaseth him sometimes to converse with us in it, and brings to our minds gracious promises, suggests such thoughts of Christ as let us into communion with him; and sometimes bring to our remembrance some precious intercourse we have had with him. Some have known much of the Father's love, the Son's salvation, and the Spirit's inward influences and operations by this, as the means. This advice is also necessary under peculiar and singular afflictions and distress. It may be God will give you to know more of his end, in dealing with you at <sup>his</sup> throne of grace, than in any other ordinance. I should almost suspect that person's spirituality, who did not look for, and gladly embrace some hint from the Lord, in this way. But to the end I may not distress the real believer, nor encourage impulses and impressions, such as may lead to enthusiasm, I add, my meaning is this:—I would have believers make frequent and peculiar observations of the Lord's dealings with their souls, especially in private prayer; what secret impressions of his love he makes upon them—what sights and views of Christ he gives them—and what scriptures he brings home, makes use of, and applies to their souls, encouraging them thereby to proceed in seeking his face, and expecting to receive from him the request

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of their lips. Our Lord makes the cases of his people his own. In all their afflictions he feels for and sympathizes with them. His affections are all suitable to his office. He has graven his people on the palms of his hands, and will never leave nor forsake them. The lively testimonial of his love, may be read in the various acts of his kindness recorded in the Gospel. Peter's weakness and want of faith, does not hinder Christ from saving him, and granting him immediate succour and relief. Rather, it served, as a foil, to set forth the transcendent grace of the Saviour. And this is a most certain truth, that there is no case, state, or circumstance, the Lord is pleased to bring any of his children into, but it is with a design to prove his love unto them, and give them indubitable evidence of it. Nor can our unbelief hinder this. "For if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself." If our faith could view the whole of God's dealings with us respecting our souls and bodies, as it relates both to time and eternity, we should find it all connected with, and influenced and disposed according to his everlasting love; and clearly see accomplished in ourselves the truth of God's divine declaration, "I will never turn away from you from doing you good." From what hath been delivered, may we learn to study the heart of Jesus—his compassion and boundless grace, and if you ask, Where shall we have a revelation of it? I answer, in the Holy Scriptures. Every declaration in it—every promise of it—every word our Lord has uttered, as

recorded in it, may yield us divine support and consolation.

But I pass on, thirdly, to observe the rebuke given by Christ to Peter, for the weakness and infirmity of his faith, which will lead us to view our Lord's displeasure and resentment at the unbelief which his dear people too often fall into, and nourish and encourage in themselves; and his love in his rebuke.

*Peter*, out of love to, and in the exercise of faith upon his most precious Lord, obeyed his divine orders, and being upheld by Christ's eternal power, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. "But, when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me: and immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" In which, as the exceeding willingness and readiness of Christ to help and succour him is manifested; so his rebuke given to Peter for his weak faith, is also held forth to view. There was no cause for *Peter* to doubt, his Lord having called him and bidden him to walk upon the water, and who had enabled him to proceed thus far. But *Peter* looks to appearances, and drops, in some measure, the exercise of his faith, and for this his divine friend reproves him. *Peter's* faith was true and unfeigned, founded on the word, and eyeing the power of Christ. But, when exercised, it did not hold out so, as to honour Christ's power by steadfastly relying thereon, to

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whom all things are possible; which was a proof that *Peter's* faith, when in its fullest height of exercise, was only strong as strengthened by Christ Jesus. Indeed it hath pleased the Lord, who hath proved and tried the faith of his people in all ages, to suffer it so to be; that the most exalted believers, Saints of high renown for their faith in God, have had their fits of diffidence, and unbelief. All which teaches us, that as faith is the gift of God, so the actings of it are wholly supernatural, and are drawn forth alone, as the Lord the Spirit is graciously pleased to put forth his divine power and influence in our souls. We talk much of faith, and many have spent much time to give a definition of it—as it respects the nature—principal acts and fruits thereof. Let any man boast of his great faith in God, he shall sooner or later know, that there is a vast difference between bold expressions, and strong, well-grounded confidence in God. As it may be said truly, that prayer is the true elixir of grace—that the truth and strength of grace are best discovered in the hour of temptation, and when withstood by Satan: so it may be said also of faith, that the truth, strength, and power of it, in the word and power of God—in the person—work—and promises of Christ, are best discerned and made manifest in a day of fiery trial and great affliction: when it is put into the furnace to the end it may shine the brighter.

God's people are chosen in the furnace of affliction, and that will discover the truth and strength of their faith.

It is too commonly the case to look too much to themselves and present things. They, if afflicted, are prone to look too much to it, by which means their faith is weakened. There is nothing the Lord's people are more prone to, than the sin of unbelief. The truth is; looking upon the perfections of God—his works in Providence—his dealings with us; and looking at and within ourselves, all serve to weaken our faith. We can neither contemplate God, nor his works, and view him therein, so as that our faith and hope in him may be increased, but as we behold him, and them, in the person, and as the works of the Mediator, the God-man Christ Jesus. It is this keeps us so great strangers to the life of faith, we being so disposed to follow the judgment of our senses and affections, though they guide us quite out of the way. Our faith should centre in the person of Christ, and look to him as crucified, and depend on his word. It is this, as the Lord the Spirit is pleased to work with it, which will make us strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. As the Lord's people have unbelief in them, so they too often fall into it, and encourage themselves in it. It is the sin which most easily besets them. We are apt to harbour hard thoughts of God—to misinterpret his gracious dealings with us; being more ready to conceive of him as a judge, than as a Father, our Father in Christ Jesus. But, as it is sinful for us to do so, our Lord graciously in his word reproves us for it, and it pleases him to bless his reproofs to his BELOVED ONES, so that they are

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ashamed to dishonour him who is love itself, by harbouring hard thoughts in their minds concerning him. Indeed there is no cause to doubt of our Lord's love, when we consider that from everlasting, his delights were with the elect sons of men. That his word declares, all his delight is in the Saints which are in the earth, and that he hath said to them, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Also his word and his name, which he hath exalted above all his word, even that name, "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin," is our everlasting security and encouragement. May it please him to enable us to survey it, to take sanctuary in it, and to bless what hath been at this time delivered unto you. *Amen.*

## SERMON XIV.

PETER WARNED BY CHRIST OF SATAN'S DESIGN ON HIM.

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LUKE XXII. 31, 32.

*And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*

THESE words were spoken by our adorable Lord at a very remarkable time, on a very solemn season, as also upon a most memorable occasion. It was that very night in which he was betrayed—after he had instituted his ordinance of the Supper, having therein given his Apostles the sacred memorials of his body and blood—setting before and representing unto them—how his body was to be broken—and his blood poured forth, to obtain their eternal redemption. Towards the close of this solemnity—after those most divine and heavenly discourses given us in the 15th and 16th chapters of John's Gospel—followed with that wonderful prayer recorded in the



17th—which was probably followed with an Hymn, our blessed Lord, having loved his own which were in the world, with an invincible love—foreseeing a storm arising, the clouds gathering—knowing what an hour of temptation was coming on, how the faith of his beloved Apostles would be tried—and that the malice of Satan towards them would be exercised—gives them all warning of it—that they might not be surprised—but prepared for it. As *Peter*, who probably was the senior man, was generally the mouth of the Apostles, when they wanted to ask any question of their Lord, so here our Lord singles out and addresses him, though what he speaks, more or less, concerned them also. “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.” To awaken, command, and fix the attention, our Lord calls *Peter* by his original name, to shew the necessity of his remembrance of what was spoken, it is twice repeated, *Simon, Simon*. Christ had long before given this man the name *Peter*, which signifies a rock, or stone, to denote the firmness and steadfastness of his faith, and his constancy and resolution, to cleave with full purpose of heart to his Lord and Master, which was his real, true and proper character, notwithstanding his partial fall. Yet, under the present temptation, which would beset him, he would prove to be weak and unstable.

To arouse him with the consideration of his danger, to remind him also of his Lord’s affectionate regard, he says, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan,” the enemy,

the implacable hater both of God and man, “hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat : but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not ; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” These words being read to you with this design, to lay them as the foundation of my present discourse, I shall endeavour to observe these three particulars as contained in them.

First, here is Christ forewarning of *Peter* concerning the temptation which would befall him, and with which he would be exercised : “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.”

Secondly, shew that he is informed what the Lord hath done for him : “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.”

Thirdly, how he is commanded, upon his reversion from his fall, to exercise himself in the discharge of duty, to take opportunity to forewarn, strengthen, and confirm his brethren : “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

These particulars, as contained in the text, we will endeavour to attend unto ; beginning with the

First, which concerns Christ's forewarning *Peter* concerning the temptation which would befall him, and with which he would be exercised. “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat.” In which we may observe, *Christ's love and care—Satan's malice—and Peter's danger*. Our Lord's divine love, and care, are discovered in informing

*Peter* concerning Satan's design upon him. He well knew *Peter's* weakness, how he would be surprised with, and carried away by the temptation:—that Satan sought an opportunity to toss him, and the rest of his spiritual brethren, to and fro, as wheat is tossed in a *sieve*; that is, to afflict and distress them by scattering them, both from Christ and one another: not in order to separate the chaff from the wheat, but to make them look entirely as chaff—intending to make them appear altogether corrupt—by hiding their graces—burying them, if possible, by the breakings forth of their weakness—sin—and corruption.

Our Lord well knew Satan's malice, subtlety, and power—that he wanted to vent it in a very particular manner at this time, and on this occasion. He knew full well the danger *Peter* would be in, how he would be surprised with the enemy—surrounded and ensnared with the temptation, and fall in consequence of it, into the very snare laid for his precious soul. We learn from hence, that such as Christ loves with an everlasting love, and hath washed from their sins in his own blood, are the special objects of the devil's hatred. As they have in them sin as well as grace, they are subject to manifold temptations, and that particular grace for which they are most eminent, draws forth the particular malice of the devil, to set himself against them for it. And the Lord is pleased to permit his dearly BELOVED ONES to be exercised at times, with sore conflicts and hellish temptations to prove their faith; to increase their grace, to improve their souls

in divine knowledge, and to render them conformable to Christ in all things. It is the good pleasure of the Lord, to single out some of his most eminent saints for a sharp and sore conflict and combat with the devil, and though the devil expresses his implacable malice and hatred against God and his children, in tempting them to sin—yet God permits them to be tempted by Satan, that he may prove and make known to them his unchangeable, and invincible love. Satan, the implacable enemy of God, and his chosen ones, is under the Lord's sovereign controul, and cannot act but by permission.

“Satan hath *desired* to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.” He had requested God, and sought to be permitted by Him to attack *Peter's* faith. The Lord gives him leave, and Satan enters into a close and single combat with *Peter*, when, though forewarned, he least suspected his danger.

Providence seems to appear for it—the door of the High Priest's palace was opened to admit it, and there, upon a slight temptation, he falls to a denial of his Lord, through a fear of suffering, or death, on his account. We here may see how weak our best resolves are—how insufficient our inherent grace is, to preserve us in an hour of temptation. *Peter* loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth—had not long since heard him say, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death”—he beheld him in his agony and bloody sweat—and was the foremost to defend his Lord when betrayed into the hands of sinners—he asked, “Lord, shall we smite with the

sword?" and, without waiting for an answer—drew his sword, and cut off *Malchus's* right ear! He followed Christ to the palace of the High Priest out of real love. His dear Master was here standing as a criminal before them; *i. e.* the Jewish *Sanhedrim*, charged with, and condemned for, crimes he was perfectly innocent of.

*Peter*, poor man! gets into bad company; better he had observed his Lord's command, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation." But, instead of being engaged in prayer, he wants to see the issue of things; how matters would go with respect to his divine Lord: and, in this place, Satan attacks his faith; fills him with fear; looks at him; points him out to others, and said unto him, before them that were there, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee." But he denied before them all, saying, "I know not what thou sayest." Surely his conscience must be wounded, and yet he continues in this wretched company, which is the outward means of drawing him still further into sin. And, it should teach you and me this lesson, not to omit duty, thinking such a circumstance requires our attention—as we shall ever find that the way of duty is the way of safety. Had *Peter* laid his Lord's words to heart, he would have found prayer to have been his best employment. He is overcome by the first temptation, which being renewed, he again falls, with more aggravating circumstances added to it; yea, he is again assaulted, and he, with oaths and imprecations, repeats his former denial of his blessed Lord. Thus low and foully did *Peter* fall from his steadfastness, though an

Apostle of Jesus Christ, who had confessed, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God"—upon which our Lord pronounced him *blessed*, and who had seen Christ transfigured on the Holy Mount.—His fall is recorded to this end, that whoever amongst us thinketh that he standeth, should take heed lest he also fall.

This leads us further to consider, what the falls of real Saints are owing to. Every child of God carries about with him a body of sin. In our fallen nature dwelleth nothing that is good. Though regeneration makes a marvellous change in the soul of a believer, yet it makes no change in the corrupt nature which we receive from *Adam* through the fall. Our corrupt nature consists entirely in carnal desires and sensual gratifications. Self, before conversion, is our great end in all. In conversion, we are turned to the Lord, and he then becomes our great end; yet sin, which dwelleth in us, will be ever putting forth some or other of its filthy motions; it being a self-acting principle, and nothing can conquer—restrain, or subdue it, but the omnipotent arm of Christ Jesus. As fallen, there is not a faculty of soul, or a member of the body, but is full of sin: and all the evil which is in the world, yea, which is in the very damned in hell, is in our hearts—there it hath its existence.

"Out of the heart (saith Christ himself) proceed evil thoughts," &c.—All evil comes from within. And every thing in the world, even every single object in it, is suited to draw forth some corrupt

lust and inclination, or other. Every one of Adam's posterity, are equally and alike fallen. Every one of us are of our own-selves naturally inclined to evil. And, the only difference in any of us, in a state of nature is, that corrupt self, runs out naturally in some to one sin, more than to another ; which generally depends upon our natural bodily constitution. But, there is not one single sinful disposition or propensity in one, but what is in all. Nay, the damned in hell have not more sin in principle in them, than you and I have. This being the case, we are never brought to the knowledge of it, until such time as the Holy Ghost is pleased to enlighten our understanding with the knowledge of divine truth, and convince us of our fallen state, sinful nature, and damnable condition. He shews us, that we are, in heart, apostates from God—that we are under the guilt and power of sin—that we are liable to the damnation of hell—and that dying in this state, we are lost and damned to all eternity. By this means the conscience is awakened—the soul is quickened, and led to feel its want of the Almighty physician, the Lord Jesus Christ, for pardon and righteousness — grace and mercy. Being thus translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son—brought under the purple covering of the blood of Jesus—the soul enjoys peace with God—is filled with joy in the Holy Ghost—and being thus passed from a state of death and condemnation, to a state of life and salvation ; and God, making himself known, and his kingdom of grace being set up in

the soul, the regenerate person sets out in order to walk with, and before God, unto all well-pleasing. From henceforth Satan begins to wage war against him, and will set himself with might and main to oppose, resist, and overcome him. He will form all his schemes exactly suitable to our corrupt tempers and inclinations, with a design to work upon, and draw them forth into act. Nor, will he ever cease from tempting and soliciting the believer. He will, day and night, abroad and at home, in private and public ordinances, be with the child of God; so that we must, if we will resist him, be under arms night and day: for we must either overcome him, or be overcome by him.

All the danger the children of God are in, arises from their corrupt hearts, lusts and sinful appetites.

Before they knew the Lord, though all the seeds and principles of sin were in them, yet there was one in particular which was then their darling—besetting—bosom-loved lust. And though, after conversion, they have no *beloved-sin*, yet they, each of them, have their *besetting-sin*. And they have, and ever in a time-state will have, reason to be exceeding careful and watchful over their own hearts, lest their old beloved sin should beset and overcome them again.

Some think, that that particular sin which hath been most indulged before conversion, as it becomes the object of a believer's invincible hatred, so he never falls by it after he is turned to the Lord; but I dare



not so think, nor so affirm, because it does not appear to be the case with all saints. We have instances and examples in the written word, of real believers falling by the same means, into the same sins, again and again. It was *Abraham's* case—It was *David's* case—as also *Peter's*. And, what befel them, befals others. We know their falls are recorded to put us in remembrance of our sinfulness and weakness, to bring us to trust in the Lord alone, and to prevent our having any confidence in the flesh. Sirs! it is not the solemn repentance—the unfeigned sorrow we have had for past sin, will be sufficient to prevent us from sin, when we are left to ourselves, and the prevailings of our own corruptions. Alas! some, whose souls have experienced *the burden of sin*, and have mourned with godly sorrow, in real sincerity before the Lord for their iniquities; have yet found the devil break in upon them, and he hath, in a manner, undone all that they have done, by stirring up some wretched lust, or sinful temper, and thereby carried all before him, to their shame and grief. When, for a long season, they have walked close with God; gone on in the performance of spiritual duties spiritually; have been kept in an holy frame, and in close communion with God, some wretched lust ariseth, stirred up by some occasion or other, and being strongly enforced by Satan's influence, it hath carried all before it. Here let me also observe, though every act of sin that you and I commit

is our own, and the fruit and effect of indwelling corruption, yet the devil also hath his hand in it. He works upon us imperceptibly and inwardly. He draws our thoughts and fixes them upon such objects and subjects, as will naturally try our tempers, stir up our corruptions, and presently inflame and overcome us. Satan designs by all his assaults, stratagems and temptations; God's dishonour, and our own ruin. Though he knows the elect are invincibly preserved by grace, yet he knows not who they are. He therefore attacks all professors of Christ's Gospel, seeing it is only the real believer holds out unto the end. And he, having found himself a match for many, who were running the race in appearance, and yet have been finally prevailed with, and overcome by him, he cares not what we profess—how sincere we are in our professions—what ordinances we enjoy, and how often we are engaged in them. It is what we know of Christ, and our full purpose of heart to cleave wholly to him, that is, and will be the principle object of his rage and malice. So that you are not to expect all his temptations will lie in one way. If thou art a young convert, he will tempt thee according to thy present circumstances. As thou art troubled with the remembrance of thy past iniquities, he will endeavour to quicken thy memory, by suggesting some particular circumstances which will serve to aggravate thy sinfulness, with a design to keep thee from believing in Christ for salvation, and thereby deject thy soul. If thou

hast found peace with God, and pardon through faith, in believing on Christ, his work, and word; he will seek a proper opportunity of suggesting to thy mind, that this is all delusion: while, at other times, he will flatter thee upon thy graces and high attainments. But, whatsoever thy constitutional temper is, here he will be sure to suit himself, and so work upon it, and stir it up, that thou wilt, at times, scarcely know what to think or make of thyself. Believer, let me observe, that as the Holy Spirit works inwardly with energy upon the soul, so does Satan also. He creeps, if I may so express it, into our very blood and spirits, and puts all within us into a ferment, filling the mind with confusion, taking off our thoughts from God and heavenly things, and infusing his infernal suggestions; which he keeps us intent upon; so that we cannot recollect ourselves, nor attend unto those very things which belong to our present, as well as to our everlasting peace. He always tempts us to sin according to the present circumstances we are in; and believers, when under temptation are like persons in a swoon—their spiritual senses fail them—they cease to have the spiritual exercise of them—and sometimes actually fall, ere they recollect themselves, their state or danger. His temptations are sudden, violent, and take us at unawares. Hence he is represented as an enemy, “who goeth about as a *roaring lion*, seeking whom he may devour.”

He is set forth in scripture in a terrible manner—

as our adversary, the devil: and by all things that may render him terrible and dreadful unto us.

An adversary for malice—a lion for strength—a roaring lion for dread—and all, and every one of the Saints of God, are in danger of being tempted sorely by him, if not continually, yet they must expect some time or other to suffer by his hands; it being the lot and portion of all Saints. He acts sometimes upon us as an Angel of Light—will fill the mind with inward ravishments, to take us off from Christ. At other times, he will assault us with his fiery darts, which inflame the soul, putting all at an instant into confusion. Anon, he will, as the roaring lion of hell, shew himself in his proper colours, and strive to compel us to, or frighten us into sin. Here I would observe, *Peter's* case is set before us for our benefit—instruction—and consolation. Peter was forewarned of the danger he was in from this public enemy—so are we. His temptation and fall are recorded, that we, taking warning from it, may not cease to pray that we enter not into temptation. Christ's care, towards all his CHOSEN ONES, is here beautifully set before us, and we have a clear representation of it, in his methods of grace; of admonition, caution, grace, and recovery, exercised by him towards his beloved *Peter*. Let me further observe, that we, (believers) all of us, shall be the subjects of corruption and temptation all our lives. And, as long as sin remains within us, which it will to our last dying breath, Satan will not cease to tempt us. As long as this

is the case with us, we shall need the God of all grace to succour us, which brings me to my

Second particular, *viz.*—To shew that *Peter* is informed what the Lord had done for him, “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” Observe his person, and his faith, are the objects of Christ’s care. “I have prayed for *thee*,” (his person) and the thing requested was, that his *faith might not fail*. It was for *Peter’s person* in particular Christ prayed, and for the preservation of the particular grace of faith; to recover him from under the temptation that was ready to invade him. Which refers, it may be, to our Lord’s prayer recorded in the 17th of John’s Gospel; in which he requested the preservation—sanctification—perseverance—and glorification—of his eleven Apostles, as well as of all Saints. Or, to some mental Prayer, offered up by him to his heavenly Father, on *Peter’s* behalf. “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” Christ, as the advocate of his people, prays for them, that they may have faith, and when they have it, he prays that it may not fail. There is nothing in believers which Satan hates more than their real unfeigned faith in Christ.

Therefore, in all his temptations, he strikes principally at it. He wanted to vent his malice against *Peter*, who had said to his Lord, “Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.” He forms therefore his temptation in direct opposition to it, and has a double end in view. The first, is to draw him into sin—the second, is to take occasion from it, to

weaken his faith. He knew it would be a suitable season to work upon *Peter's* unbelief, when the guilt of sin lay heavy on his conscience, and to increase his jealousies and suspicions, concerning his personal interest in Christ. Satan hoped, by prevailing on *Peter*, to commit so gross a sin, to draw him to despair. As faith is the gift of God, and the exercise of it right pleasing in the sight of God; so, despair and doubting, are the master-piece of hell:—the chiefest work the devil delights in. For, as to comfort the afflicted soul, is the most proper and pleasing work of the Spirit of God, so is disquietude and distress the proper work of Satan. He hates faith, and also the joy of faith—it being exercised upon Christ the glorious object of it, the greatest enemy to Satan. Herewith the believer quencheth all the fiery darts of the devil. As Christ foresaw Satan's design, he sets his prayer against it. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." And the security of our faith is owing to our Lord's powerful mediation, and powerful intercession. Though our faith may continue to be fiercely attacked, yet, notwithstanding all the opposition of hell and earth unto it, it will be found a solid and substantial grace—an immortal and incorruptible seed—of which Christ is the author and finisher:—against which the gates of hell shall never finally overcome and prevail. Our Lord prays not, that Peter should be kept from wholly falling, but that his faith should be kept from totally failing. He prayed not for a prevention of his fall; but for a recovery of him after his fall. From hence we see that Christ's interces-

sion on our behalf in heaven, is not always for keeping off a temptation from us. For many times Christ suffers fierce temptations to invade us for gracious ends, both for his own glory and our good. In his intercession he solicits that temptation may not utterly sink us and finally overcome us. Christ sues not for believers so much against a temptation, as for their faith. For if that be exercised, temptation will then fall like a bullet against a brazen wall. He is content we should be in an evil world, but he is not satisfied unless we be preserved from the evil, or rescued and recovered from it, after we have been assaulted with it, and suffered by it. And therefore, a believer's courage, hath a support in the greatest temptation. Our Lord lays *Peter's* preservation from a total and final apostacy upon this security ; "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." He doth not say, *Peter*, there is such a principle in thee, that is able to stand—thy own free will, and the strength of thine inherent grace, shall bring thee off, and preserve thee from falling. No : but, "I have prayed." There lay his, and there also lies our security. From hence, I would proceed to an experimental matter, which often puzzles and perplexes real Saints, who feel themselves assaulted within by strong corruptions, and without with Satan's hellish temptations — they marvel at it, that though they look upon sin as their greatest misery, and loath it sincerely—seek the Lord earnestly—and with most vehement outcries at the throne of grace, pray to be delivered from temptation :—yet, are so far from being an

swered, that they find temptations more fierce, strong, and violent, than what they have hitherto been called to exercise themselves with. Beloved, observe what hath already been delivered, the truth of which appears in *Peter's* case, that our Lord's prayers and intercession on our behalf, are not for the keeping us from the hour of temptation, but for support and prevention; so that we may not be finally prevailed over, nor apostatize from God. The more we increase in grace, the more we may expect temptation. The longer we live in the school of Christ, if the Lord means to advance us therein, the sharper conflicts we shall have with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The nearer we come to glory, the more furious will Satan's blasts be against us; yea, it may be, when we are in full sail for eternal glory, and just arrived at our heavenly Father's house, we shall then have the closest combat with hell. Let us not forget that the Lord hath chosen, and called his beloved ones, to be good soldiers—to engage in war with the devil—to fight the good fight of faith, striving against sin, resisting unto blood. And this will continue until they are called to lay hold of eternal life, by entering into the joy of their Lord. It is by this we are to be made conformable to the Captain of our salvation, who learned obedience by the things which he suffered." And he himself suffered being tempted. And as he had an issue out of them all, so shall all his members. In the wilderness he was tempted by the devil, whom he overcame: The devil left him, and behold, Angels



came and ministered unto him." In the garden he was tempted, and in an agony : the issue was, "an Angel came and comforted him, and he *was heard in that he feared.*" On the Cross he was put to it. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And he was heard; and cried, "It is finished." The great conflict is over—and here is an end of all. God delivered him out of all troubles: and will deliver his people out of theirs also. If you consult the experience of all Saints, and read the book of the wars of the Lord's people, who have been engaged in fighting the good fight of faith, you will find God has chosen, and called forth some of them, even some of his principal worthies, to more close and peculiar assaults with the devil than others. For instance—Job, a man of whom God himself appears fain to boast, (if I may so express it) whose words of him are, "There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil;" which only increases Satan's rage, who seeks to obtain leave to have him in his hands. Which is granted with this restriction—"Only upon himself put not forth thine hand."—"Behold, he is in thine hand, but save his life." Job, in this furnace, glorified the Lord, losing nothing in it but his dross. God's end is to magnify his grace—Satan's to work upon his corruption. It is amazing what the Apostle Paul, one of Christ's worthies, records concerning himself, as it respects the subject we are now upon. He tells us, in the twelfth chapter of his second epistle to the Corinthians, that he knew, "a man in Christ, caught up

into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter." Can God exalt and advance this believer higher? Can he improve his soul, and exercise his grace better, for the profit of his Church here below? Yes, blessed be the Lord of all lords, he can. High and elevated frames, are not so profitable to us, as low and humble ones; accompanied with high prizings of Christ. *Paul* must come down from his altitudes, and be fitter for further use to the Church here below. The vision he had of the immaculate Lamb—the song he heard sung in heaven to the honour of his Majesty—the elevation of his soul when admitted into heavenly glory, are by no means so useful for us to know. God deals therefore with this his high favourite in an extraordinary way. He lets loose Satan upon him, to buffet and molest him; and all to keep down pride.

"And, lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Strange! Satan is here styled, a Gift. "There was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me." Observe this, ye tempted souls.

This is God's way of preferment. His greatest

favourites he thus tries and exerciseth. I proceed, to raise another observation, which, it may be, has often tried many of you that are real Saints. You not only think it strange that your spiritual trials last, but it may be that which greatly perplexes you is, Satan seems to gain more ground, and reap more advantage over you, than in times which are past. Your corruptions, which were in your apprehensions dead, seem to revive. And you are strangely influenced at times with them, and Satan working upon them is too strong for you. Beloved, this being an experimental point, it will not be amiss to consider the three ages of Christianity. By which I mean that of babes—young men—and Father's in Christ. The first of which is often, as it respects sensible enjoyments of God's love, the happiest. It is chiefly employed in expressing our love to God, for the pardon of our sins, and in calling him our Father in Christ Jesus. In this state during the continuance of us in it, the Lord is most graciously pleased to save his children from those fights and conflicts with self—sin—and unbelief: which they are afterwards engaged in. Such as are young men in Christ, are chiefly exercised with strong conflicts with their own hearts' lusts—with Satan's snares—and the world's temptations. And, I may appeal to you, who are passed from hence to be Father's in Christ, and ask, Do you not remember some sharp conflicts—sore trials, and close war with the devil, which you then had? and which you were made "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might to resist?" It is the peculiar character of

young men in Christ, to be strong, owing to the word of God dwelling in them; by which they overcome the wicked one. It is the distinguishing character of Father's in Christ, to know *Him that is from the beginning*. To be taken with the eternity of Christ's person, and his most glorious work of salvation. I might observe also, that God exerciseth us according to what our spiritual age—state—and strength will bear. These things rightly considered may yield support to some tried souls. For example. Thou art a believer. Hast lived it may be 10, 20, or 30 years, since effectual calling took hold of thine heart, when thou wast first brought to the knowledge of the Lord, and tasted that he was gracious." Then thy sins, and sinful tempers, received a death blow from the arm of the omnipotent Jesus.

Thou didst then tremble at the thought of living to commit the least sin any more. And yet, it may be, thou hast lost that first conversion-work and frame, and though true grace is in thee, it is at a very low ebb. Consider, it may be, thou wast then more sensible of the change which God had wrought in thee, and because thou didst not then feel thy corruptions, it is likely, thou mightest conceive they were all dead.

Temptations have since served to discover that they are not dead, and thou hast found the need of Christ to subdue them, and keep them under, as much as to cleanse thee from their guilt—and to pardon them. Sometimes, believers think their case bad, because they feel their guilt and sin more than

formerly they did. But this is a real evidence that Christ is in them, who is making these discoveries of inward guilt, and impurity unto them, in order that they may renounce themselves, and cleave entirely in love to him. But, it may be, this is the case with some of you, whose souls God hath most powerfully wrought upon — you have undergone strange alterations—and though you are afraid to speak out, yet you think this to be your real case, that your sins have been more since you knew the Lord, both in number and aggravation, than they were before, even when you were in a state of unregeneracy.

What shall I say to you? It hath been the real case with some. Certainly it was so with *Peter*. His sin was more foul, black, and abominable, than any committed by him before. *Jeremiah*, a Prophet, utters himself in such a manner, long after he had exercised his prophetic office, as is little short of blasphemy. *Job*, of whom God boasteth, though at first he received his trials as coming from the Lord, with great patience; yea, blessed God for them, yet, by-and-by, when whetted and soaked through and through with the affliction, his spirit rises to a great degree of impatience. It is a truth, as we grow in years, corruptions, and constitutional tempers and lusts grow up with us, and vent themselves sometimes in a way we are not aware of, and least expect. It may be thou wast called when young, and the greatest part of thy former life was past in childhood and younger years: but since thou art grown up, and corruptions are grown up with thee, though these received

a death wound at thy first calling ; they may yet exercise more strength, than thou mightest perceive when thou wert much younger. It may be also thy case, that the circumstances thou hast been in, may have discovered unto thee, or drawn forth from thee, some worse sins, than thy unregeneracy ever knew. Yet here let me appeal unto thee, whose case this is, and ask you in the name of God—Dost thou not look upon all the sins committed by thee—upon all the corruptions which have had their power and influence over thee, as thy greatest miseries? I know, as a believer in Christ, thou dost ; yea, though thou hast sinned, hath it not also, more or less, been accompanied with a real reluctance and unwillingness? Has it not caused thee to groan, “O wretched creature that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Let me add, you who have been brought to look at the temptations you have had to sin, as your greatest miseries, and your actual falls, as your greatest afflictions ; “The God of all Grace,” who loves your persons in Christ Jesus, accounts sin, which is your greatest real misery, and is so accounted of by you, your greatest evil, and he himself looks upon it as a misery in you, and to you. It is his grace wrought in your hearts, which causeth you to look on your sins, corruptions, and temptations, as your greatest miseries. And your sins and infirmities under temptations and Satan's conflicts, do move God to pity and help you, in point of proneness unto, or falling into sin, more than under any mi-

sery that can befall us, says Dr. Goodwin. Why? because they are the greatest miseries in his eye, which his children have, who is their Father. Well might Paul say, "If God be for us, who shall be against us?" for if sins, as they are temptations and miseries, move God for us, What is it else can move him against us? I pass on, to the

Third particular, to shew, that *Peter* is commanded upon his reconversion, and recovery from his fall, to exercise himself in the discharge of duty—to take opportunity to forewarn—strengthen, and confirm his brethren. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Behold, the love of Christ! *Peter* must be winnowed and sifted by Satan, that he may be a good minister of Jesus Christ, able to speak feelingly—compassionately—and experimentally, to the Lord's tempted and tried ones.

*Luther* says, prayer—temptation—and meditation, make a good Divine. Some, on reading these words, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," it may be are ready to ask, Was *Peter* a converted man before his fall? Yes. What then does our Lord mean by saying, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren?" I answer, *Peter*, by his fall, was, as it were, wholly out of joint: his mind polluted, his frame discomposed, his faith, as to its spiritual exercise, so low, that it was not engaged at all about spiritual and heavenly things. So that for *Peter* to be recovered from his fall, to have a manifestation of God's pardoning

mercy—the shine of his Saviour's face and presence—the comfortable quickenings of the Holy Spirit, was, as it were, a kind of a re-conversion and new creation with him, and upon him. By which means he would most cheerfully, under a divine impulse, return to the Lord from whom he, by his fall, most awfully had backslidden and revolted.

One look from Christ recovered *Peter*: who looking on his Lord and Saviour, found himself restored and healed, and, as it were, re-converted with a look from him, and by a look to him. By *Peter's* fall, Christ prepares him to be a good minister of the Gospel: one who could speak of Christ, and free grace, feelingly, skilfully; with affection, and out of his own experience. As none knows the trials—temptations—buffetings, and conflicts of Christ's ministers but themselves; so they all serve to be of excellent use to them. In increasing their experience, in giving them utterance, in opening cases which would otherwise be neglected by them, and in making them very tender and compassionate to the flock of God, especially such of them as groan under a wounded spirit, a broken heart, occasioned by actual falls into sin, or under the withdrawings of the Lord's countenance and manifestative presence. *Peter* was a good casuist. He knew what it had been to sin against light and love; and his broken-heart and bones, being healed and set by Christ, as his intercessor and advocate, it caused him to humble himself under the mighty hand of God, and to walk humbly with him, and fitted him



to open and speak of Christ as a Saviour and Advocate, most advantageously. The man is singled out for two remarkable services. The one was to preach the funeral sermon for *Judas*, the traitor and apostate; every word in which went to *Peter's* heart, and caused him to admire the sovereignty, freedom, and riches of grace, which "reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The other was to preach the first sermon after the descent of the Holy Ghost, to set forth Christ as risen from the dead, and crowned in heaven with glory, and to direct the murderers of Jesus, to believe on him to the saving of their souls. *Peter* is honoured as the instrument of converting three thousand souls, under one single sermon, and by this means, the virtue of our Lord's most precious righteousness and blood is most highly exalted. We see here in *Peter*, that free grace exalts itself, sometimes more gloriously in blessing such who have been in some instances permitted to fall into great acts of sin, than in others who have most graciously been kept from falling. It being God's prerogative to glorify and exalt his grace, according to the good pleasure of his own will. Our Lord bids *Peter*, on his recovery from his fall, to exercise himself in the discharge of duty. And he, as having Christ's command in view, writes two general epistles, for the benefit of all the holy brethren. In the first of which, he solemnly warns the whole brotherhood of their danger, from the common enemy. "Be sober, be vigilant—because your adversary, the

dévil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." This exhortation came from him excellently well. By bitter experience he had known, felt and experienced, the malice, power, and subtlety of Satan. Therefore, he with his eye hereon, gives a general caution to all the followers of the Holy Lamb, to be upon their guard, to watch the motions of this implacable foe. He had been blessed with deliverance, after he had been well nigh swallowed up of him; so that he is qualified to hold forth a divine cordial to those whose souls suffered by means of Satan's assaults, and who were broken by means of affliction from sundry temptations. He had experienced "the God of all Grace," doing for him above all he could ask, or think, and he knew him to be "the God of all Grace," to all his dearly beloved ones. Hence he saith, for the comfort, encouragement, support, and relief of tempted, tried Saints—"But the God of all Grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." In which words—the title, "The God of all Grace," and the promise (for such it is) that the God of all Grace, after his children have suffered awhile from Satan's temptations, and their own sinful corruptions, will perfect:—*i. e.* renew in their souls whatsoever decays they may have undergone, and by the quickenings and renewings of the Holy Ghost, make them shine bright and glorious—That he will strengthen them with strength in their souls—stablish them

in Christ—settle them on him as their everlasting foundation, and admit them to the enjoyment of his eternal glory. It has all things contained in it which can afford them suitable and divine support ; whilst they are in their present militant state ; and who, of the whole college of Apostles, could be found more capable of opening and explaining this most precious promise, than our instructor before us ? It is a common saying with many Christians, there is nothing like experimental preaching. Surely, we may find it in its perfection in the words before us. When Peter wrote them, as he had felt the energy of every part of them in his own soul's case, so an unction accompanied them, which must render them medicinal to the Lord's tried and tempted people. Like a good shepherd, under Christ the great Shepherd, *Peter* puts Christ's command into execution, who had said to him, " Feed my lambs : feed my sheep." He takes Christ for his example, who knowing the power, malice, and cunning of Satan, in his snares to hunt, and wound precious souls, forewarned *Peter* thereof : so he having gained by his fall, greater knowledge of his own sinfulness—Satan's influence in the hour of temptation — and Christ's compassion — warns all believers, and bids them be on their guard. He prepares a most precious cordial for those of them whose souls are wounded. Gives them a full prospect of grace, such as is no where expressed besides ; styling God, " The God of all Grace." Suggesting, there is no sort nor kind of way in which,

and by which grace may be vented, but it shall be upon the vessels of mercy. O believer, let this title, "The God of all Grace," cheer and refresh thy poor drooping spirit. Dost thou suffer by reason of indwelling sin? the God of all Grace has freely forgiven thee, and the God of all Grace will subdue thine iniquities for thee. Dost thou suffer from Satan? So do all thy fellow-travellers to Sion, and the God of Peace will bruise Satan under thy feet shortly—dost thou suffer from the world, it is recorded of the crowned heads in heaven, that they came out of great tribulation.

May the Lord put life and unction into his word. *Amen.*

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## SERMON XV.

### GOD REFINES HIS PEOPLE.

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#### ZECHARIAH XIII. 9.

*And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, it is my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God.*

**I**N this chapter, the Holy Ghost by the Prophet is treating of the death of Christ; of the effects and consequences of that wonderful death, and what

would happen and befall the Jews upon the account of the Messiah's being cut off. At the 7th verse, the Prophet speaks of the death of Christ in these words: "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones."

In which words, we may observe, the hand of God the Father in the death of Christ, and that it was his act to draw forth the sword of vindictive justice, and sheath it in the sinless humanity of his co-equal Son, who was his equal by nature, and his Shepherd by office. Jesus, the Shepherd of his Father's flock, who is emphatically styled, the Great Shepherd—the Chief Shepherd—and the Good Shepherd, had not only undertaken to feed the flock of slaughter, the holy and beautiful flock, but he engaged with his divine Father, and promised to lay down his life for the sheep. He appeared for this end and purpose, clothed in and with the nature of his people. He presented himself unto his Father as their surety, victim, and sacrifice. And, the Father beholding him standing in the law-place, room and stead of his people, draws forth the glittering sword of his justice, and cries, Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts. And here I would observe, what a wonderful support is in this passage given unto our faith! The Father here acknowledges Christ, though now in his lowest state of humilia-

tion, even when clothed and covered with the sins of his people, and bearing them all in his own body on the tree, to be his fellow and equal.

“The man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts.” It was the Father’s act to awake the sword of divine justice against his co-equal Son, as our surety; and, it was the Son’s act to sustain the stroke, and he, being the fellow of the Lord of Hosts, was hereby capable of sustaining it, and satisfying infinite justice. And here we see, from whence the blood of Christ receives its everlasting virtue and efficacy, and why it is called, precious blood. It is not precious, merely, because it was the blood of a sinless humanity, but it was, and ever will be precious blood, because, He that shed it, was God and Man united in the person of one Christ. Hence, his blood is called, the blood of God, and his life, the life of God. Feed, says Paul, the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. And, the Apostle John, says, God laid down his life for us. The blood of Christ receives all its virtue and everlasting efficacy to cleanse us from sin, and that for ever, from the altar of his Deity. And Christ, being Jehovah’s equal, the Man, Jehovah’s fellow! What unknown, everlasting, and eternal virtue must there be in his blood and death! No marvel therefore, that the Lord addressing poor sin-burdened and heavy-laden sinners speaks thus unto them. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Oh! what a Jesus

have we to build and rest our eternal hopes upon who is "God over ALL, blessed for ever, *Amen*" In whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in whom all his people are complete. The act of bruising Christ was God the Father's, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief." He plunged the sword of divine justice into the heart and bowels of his eternal Son. And, when the Great Shepherd of the flock was thus smitten, all the Disciples forsook him and fled; which in this 7th verse is foretold, "Smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn my hand upon the little ones," verse 8. "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off, and die" (meaning, as I understand it, the destruction and desolation which would be brought upon the Jews for their contempt and rejection of the Son of God) "but the third part shall be left therein," verse 9. "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, it is my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God." The words of our text is a promise, made by the Lord unto his people, in which is a discovery of rich, free, and boundless grace. The persons unto whom the promise is directed, are represented as being in afflicting and trying circumstances, and the Lord here promises to bring them through, and to bestow upon them the abundance of his mercy. Perhaps there is not a single promise to be found in all the book

of God, which bears such a transcendent cluster of graces and blessings as this before us. Here is the Lord promising to bring his people through the fire, by which we are to understand affliction; great and grievous affliction.

And, secondly, he promises, that their affliction shall answer some good and valuable end: "I will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried:" make full proof of them, and cause their graces to shine the brighter by means of their affliction. And then follows, in the third place, what the Lord's people shall do when thus refined and tried: "They shall call on my name." And, fourthly, the Lord gives them to know that he would be found of them: I will, says the Lord, hear them. I will say, in answer to their prayers, when they cry unto me, "It is my people;" and they, under the gracious manifestations of my goodness, shall say, "The Lord is my God." In a dependance upon the blessed Spirit, we are to attempt an explanation of this blessed promise. And, in order to open the passage before us, I would first observe, that all the people of God are more or less afflicted in this world. Indeed man, fallen man, is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. But, the people of God, in an especial manner are afflicted in this life. For, as they are by divine grace called out of the world, and are separated from a sinful and vain conversation, so they cannot but expect persecution, more or less, from the men of it. Every truly godly person, by his holy life and conversation, does tacitly condemn those who live in sin. And the secret reproof, which



is often reflected upon the ungodly, through the holy and shining examples of the Saints, will cause the seed of the serpent to shew its enmity at, and against the seed of the woman. “If ye were of the world,” says our Lord, “the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” But, in a more especial manner, the people of God are afflicted by reason of the corruptions, which arise from their own hearts. They, as they are brought to know the plague of their own hearts, find and feel, that in their flesh dwelleth nothing that is good. And that the flesh is always contrary unto the Spirit, that when they would do good, evil is present with them; and that the flesh lusteth always contrary unto the Spirit, so that they cannot do the things which they would. There is not a greater affliction which befalls the truly godly, and which afflicts and distresses them so sorely, as the feeling, sight, and sense, which they have of the corruption and depravity of their fallen nature. It fetches many sighs from them, many complaints against themselves, and many fears; and they often groan being burdened with a sight and sense of their indwelling corruption. The godly are likewise afflicted by the devil, by his cunning wiles and artful policies, whereby he seeks their destruction. He is never weary, night nor day, in his attempts upon the people of God, trying by inward fraud, or open violence, to hurt their souls, and to bring them, if he possibly can, to dishonour God. And he will, as opportunity presents itself, endeavour to stir up

evil men against them. The Lord is pleased to appoint both the inward and the outward cross for his people's good. The inward for the benefit of the new man, and the outward likewise for the same purpose, to wean the heart and affections of his people, from this present evil world, and earthly objects, and to excite and draw forth their graces, more and more, into act and exercise. Under the inward cross, the believer learns more of his unholy nature, of the total depravity of every faculty of his body and soul, of his being of his own nature inclined unto evil, than he would otherwise know. Hereby he is brought to see that his salvation is all of grace—that it is of the Lord's mercies that he has not been long ago consumed. And here he learns experimentally, that the Lord hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.

Now he is taught by the Holy Spirit to value the free grace of God, and the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ—the love of his heart—and the fulness of his grace. And, by this means, he is brought to see his need of making continual use of the fulness of Jesus, and of dealing with Christ alone in the business of salvation—of renouncing himself in every point of view, and of living out of himself by faith upon the Son of God. Now, as the Lord permits his dear people to be thus exercised, so he likewise sometimes permits peculiar, long, and sore trials to befall them. And, to an eye of sense and carnal reason, they may seem to be plagued more than other men. And, under long and grievous afflictions they would sink, were it not

for those gracious supports and consolations, which the Lord is pleased to bestow upon them. The Lord does in our text, promise to bring his people through the fire: not only does he support them, under the burdens laid upon them, but he undertakes to bring them through it, and sooner or later, safely out of it.

And, secondly, he promises to cause their affliction to answer some good and valuable end. "I will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried." God's end and design in all the afflictions and chastisements which he brings upon his dear people, is their real good, and his own glory. It is for his people's good—to try the truth of their grace—to make them appear, more or less, unto the world to be what they truly are, and what they profess to be, and to give opportunity unto them for the exercise of their various graces, wrought in their hearts by the Holy Spirit. This, says the Prophet, speaking of God's chastisements, "is all the fruit to take away sin," that is, to prevent sin, to increase the believer's hatred of it, and to strengthen him in his resolutions, in the strength of the Lord, to fight against it. Indeed there are none who profess, in a particular manner the name of Christ, but he will, sooner or later, thus try them. Sirs! ye that profess Christ, look to it; assuredly our Lord will try you. And in the day of trial, in the hour of temptation, every soul, who has not heartily closed in with Christ, and is not made one Spirit with the Lord, will most assuredly fall from his steadfastness which he professed, and so fall as

**not to be recovered.** God's usual method of dealing **with** professors is this—He suffers them, at one time or other of their lives, to be manifested to be what they are. Their most prevalent sin is permitted to make an attack upon them, and in an hour of temptation, the love of the world, riches, or honours, or pleasures, or some secret lust, swallows them up, and hereby our Lord's words are awfully fulfilled, "Unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he seemeth to have." And, as the Lord hereby discovers unto others, who are his, and who are holy, so by the exercise of his providential dispensations, he tries the hearts of his own people, and makes proof of their love to him, their faith in him, their zeal for his glory, and their patience in bearing affliction; and their submission, to his holy will, is by means of his various dispensations, towards them manifested. And, as he is pleased hereby to manifest the truth of grace in his people, so he hereby gives them a proper opportunity for the exercise of it. And, though no afflictions are in themselves joyous, but grievous, yet, nevertheless, afterwards they yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. "I will refine them," says the Lord, "as silver is refined." The children of God reap some blessed fruit from their heavenly Father's loving correction. This is his end, to refine them as silver, to purge out their corruptions, to wean their affections from earthly and present things, and to bring them to set their hearts more

upon Christ, their treasure and portion. As the silver shines the brighter for its being refined, so the Lord's people are refined in the furnace of afflictions, and by means of it, they lose much of their dross, and are as silver seven times purified. Indeed we have many testimonies to the truth of it. Hear David, for an example, and as voucher for all the Lord's people: "Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." Job received this benefit by affliction, that he more humbly cried out, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes," than he had ever done before. I will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried. The Lord tries the faith of his people, and it is always for their good. One, whose faith had been tried to purpose, says, "that the trial of faith is much more precious than gold that perisheth." And the faith of God's people shall be found, though tried with fire, to the praise and honour and glory, both of the Lord the giver, and of his children at the appearing of Jesus Christ. God's people are very precious unto him, and so are their graces; for they are the fruits of his Holy Spirit working in them. Gold is a precious metal, and God's redeemed are his precious and honourable ones. Their persons are dear and precious unto the Lord. Their lives and their deaths are so, for "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints." And the Lord of Hosts, the keeper of Israel, is round about them as a wall of fire to secure and defend them from the attacks of their spiritual foes, and he is their glory

the midst of them. And, when he tries his people with manifold afflictions and temptations, it is that they may appear to be gold indeed, which is nothing but its dross by being cast into the fire. I will try them as gold is tried, to this very end, that they may be the more glorious and illustrious. As gold will bear the trial, so will the Lord's people; they shall have their hearts melted down by the flame of Jehovah's love, and under its blessed influence, they shall receive more than before of the stamp of his divine image, and be renewed by it more conformable to Christ Jesus. And, by means of his most blessed promises, applied unto their hearts by his Holy Spirit, they shall be led to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the world, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. The Lord does carefully preserve and highly esteem his people, as his wealth, and as his portion—He considers them as his treasure, for “the Lord's portion is his people.” And he brings them to say, with great delight, that the Lord is their portion. The Church, in the Lamentations, says, “The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore I hope in him.” And the Lord's delight is in them that fear him, and that hope in his mercy. Truly, it may well be said of God's people, “Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people blessed by the Lord!” And here we are to consider, in the third place, what the Lord's people shall do when thus refined and tried. “They shall call on my name.” What a most blessed effect of divine

grace is this ! Afflictions, temptations, and distresses, shall bring the Lord's people on their knees, and will cause them to seek God right early.

And in the mount of difficulty the Lord will be seen. Their sorrows shall cause them to cry unto God ; and the Lord will be a present help unto them in every time of trouble. But what shall be their encouragement ? The name of God. Hence the wise man says, "the name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and are safe." Indeed, the great and glorious name of the Lord our God, as recorded in the 34th of Exodus, verse 6, 7, contains in every letter and tittle of it, strong encouragement and consolation to the redeemed of the Lord at all times, and especially in times of affliction and distress. What case or state can a child of God possibly be in, in which he may not draw some blessed encouragement from this name of the Lord to support him ? Here is, "the Lord, the Lord God, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin : " and, "this is his name for ever ; and this is his memorial throughout all generations." God is to his people a covenant God, bound by covenant and oath, to save every one that believeth on Jesus. And as a covenant God, he pardons the iniquities of his people, and he does it freely, for his own name's sake, and to the praise of the glory of his grace. It is a strange argument, which David urges the Lord with, why he should pardon his sins : "For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." The Lord has been

pleased to reveal his name in his word, and he teaches his people by his Spirit, how to plead with him, to make good his name and the gracious declarations of his grace and mercy unto them. The word of God contains the declarations of Jehovah's grace, and the promises serve sweetly to encourage the Lord's people in prayer. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace and supplication ; and to pray aright is as great a thing as to make a world. For none can pray truly, but such as have the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in them. Prayer, is the breath of spiritual life ; yea, it is the breathings of the Holy Spirit in us. And the Holy Spirit enables the believer to pray ; He stirs him up to prayer, assists him in it, and guides him through it, and often encourages him in it, by bringing the blessed promises of God to remembrance, and by quickening the soul in the duty by means of them. The Holy Spirit is said to make intercession in us with groans which cannot be uttered. And, as the Lord has erected a throne of grace, and encouraged his children to come unto it with boldness ; so Jesus in heaven acts the part of an intercessor before God on our behalf ; and the Holy Spirit, who knows our cases, and all the love, grace, and purpose of God in Christ towards us, he is graciously pleased to assist us in our supplications. He suggests matter and manner, and helps us to use such arguments as will prevail. The Lord's children do not pray without rule, for the word of God is their rule. They pray for what God has promised, and often when they are languid



in duty, the Holy Spirit by giving them some secret item of their heavenly Father's love towards them, animates them, and it serves divinely to encourage them. It is very useful, in order to help us to pray aright, to study the promises. And among the cunning wiles of the devil, this is one, to take off our minds from the study of those promises which are most suited to our own case and state. We shall find, that our minds are more engaged upon such parts of God's most holy word, and kept upon such portions as are not so applicable to our present circumstances. We should study the promises of God, which are most suited to our present case, and pray over them, and seek to God for him to make good unto us in our experience what is contained in them. In our coming to God's throne, we should bring with us our wants, and spread them before the Lord; and God's promises, and plead them with him. God's people are here represented as a praying people. "They shall call on my name." What was said of Paul, at his conversion, may be said of all the people of God, "Behold, he prayeth." God's children, though still-born, in their first birth, are not so in their second birth. They are all born crying after God. And the Lord's people are in a happy case, when they are employed often in conversing with God at his throne of grace. It serves to make their faces shine, for the more they converse with God at his throne, and the more they have their conversation in heaven, the more holy and spiritual they will become. And

indeed, as prayer is the desire of the heart, and the wish and secret breathing of the soul after the Lord, the believer will often be lifting up his heart to God in heaven, and holding converse and communion with him, even when employed about the lawful concerns of this life. As the Lord brings his people to call upon his name, so they shall not call upon it in vain. For,

Fourthly, the Lord gives his people, in the words of our text, to know, that he will be found of them. I will, says the Lord, hear them. What a blessed declaration is this! I will hear them. The Lord's people never did, nor never shall cry unto him, call upon him, put their trust in him, and pour out their hearts before him, in vain. What an encouragement is this for prayer! What an honour does God vouchsafe to his people, to admit them into familiar converse with himself, and to open his heart unto them, and lead them into the knowledge of his covenant, and open his ear to attend to their cry, and unto the voice of their prayers! He never said unto the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain. There is not a petition made by his people but he observes, and so observes it as to return a gracious answer. It would be well, if the people of God did attend in their experience unto this, to see and observe what gracious answers the Lord is pleased to make unto their prayers. For, be assured, no prayer is offered by the Lord's people, no one petition put up at the throne of grace, but the Lord hears and answers it as far as it will be for his own glory and the good

of his chosen. An objection, perhaps, may be made against this. It may be, thou hast had a particular desire for the conversion of a near and dear friend or relative. Thou hast had them much upon thy heart, and thou hast been very importunate with the Lord for them, and yet thou canst not see the fruit of thy prayers nor the least answer. It may be, that the Lord may not have either a purpose of grace towards such an one as thou hast been thus praying for, or the Lord's time for calling such an one, may not yet be come. Or, it may be, the Lord has, or means to give thee an answer to thy prayer, in the conversion of one whom thou knowest not, and who, when converted, shall be as near and dear unto thee, in the bowels of Christ, as the other possibly could. Or, it may be, that in this matter, God means to bring thee to trust in his faithfulness, and he may answer thy prayers, even when thou art, as to this world, no more. Surely, the Lord's people may see their prayers more answered, in this particular, than they commonly imagine; for all the work of God, which he is carrying on in the world, is in answer to their prayers. So that when we hear of sinners being converted to the Lord, let who will be the honoured instruments made use of in this work, yet we may rejoice in it, as being parties in some measure concerned, seeing we are daily praying unto the Lord, that he would convert sinners, and bring them unto himself. And as to the objection, we shall find, that when the Lord will not be entreated by us on

the behalf of any one, we shall find them steal out of our prayers insensibly, which will be an item unto us, that the Lord would not have us too solicitous for individuals, but be more contented and confined in our addresses to the throne, for the Lord to bring whom he pleases unto the knowledge of the truth. The Lord promising to hear his people, when they call upon his name, implies, that he will open unto them the treasures of his grace, and give them a most blessed experience of his goodness unto their souls. “I will,” says the Lord, “say, (in answer unto them) ‘It is my people.’ And they (under the gracious manifestations of my goodness) shall say, ‘The Lord is my God’.” What holy and blessed converse does the Lord, at times, hold with his people, and admit them unto! What David found true in experience, many of the children of the Most High, likewise find, *viz.* That blessed is the man whom Jehovah chooseth, and causeth to approach unto him, that he may dwell in the Lord’s courts. Such shall be satisfied with the goodness of God’s house, and with the pleasures of his holy temple. God stands ready to acknowledge his people, to own them, and to declare his good-will towards them. Indeed, the Lord has done such great things for them, that we cannot wonder at any further grace he vouchsafes or manifests unto them. For he has loved them with an everlasting love; has chosen them in Christ the Son of his Love, and has blessed them in him with all spiritual blessings. He has given his

Son, the Son of his Love, his only-begotten, his well-beloved Son for them, to work out and bring in, by his divine obedience to the law, in their room and stead, an everlasting righteousness, to be their robe before the throne, and their garment of salvation. And, he has given him to be the sacrifice for their sins, and his blood cleanseth them from all sin. He has also promised to give his Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and he comes from them, to quicken poor sinners, and make them alive to God by faith in Christ Jesus. The great work and office of the Holy Ghost in the soul is, to reveal the Lord's Christ, and to make the quickened person acquainted with the Father's love in him. It is a great and glorious part of his office to evidence unto us our union with Christ. Our Lord, in the 14th of John's Gospel, speaking of the descent of the Holy Ghost, says, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in Me, and I in you." The Holy Spirit having quickened souls and made them alive unto God, brings them to the knowledge of Christ, of their union to, and interest in him, and from hence follows, their having and holding divine and spiritual communion with him. And the Lord, in the means of grace, in the ordinances of his house, is pleased to receive them graciously, to manifest his love unto them freely, and to make them joyful in his house of prayer. He owns and acknowledges them to be his people, by manifesting himself unto them as he does not unto the world. He embraces them in the arms

of his everlasting mercy, sheds his love abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, gives them the knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins, and reveals Christ in their hearts, as their hope of glory. He owns them to be his own, the people of his choice—the purchase of his Son's blood, and, deny them who will, the Lord will say of them, "It is my people." In an especial manner, it holds forth unto us, how ready the Lord is to remember his covenant-people, and to remember his covenant-grace and love and mercy towards them. And, the Lord takes the most seasonable time and opportunity to own his people. Indeed, he cannot forget them, for they are his jewels, his portion, his inheritance, his treasure, his royal diadem, his crown of glory, Isa. lxii. 3. "I will," says the Lord, "say, 'It is my people'." I know them well, I hear their voice, I am ready to help them, and mighty to save them. And they, under the gracious manifestations of my goodness, shall say, "the Lord is my God." This shall be their language, and their confession, the *Lord is my God*: my covenant God and Father. They shall, from his gracious dealings with them, be brought to know their interest in him, and this knowledge shall lead them to make an open confession of him, and of his goodness unto them. And nothing can be more comfortable unto believers than this, to be brought to know that the Lord is their God. This is one great part of the great office of the Holy Spirit, to give the Lord's children

to know their personal interest in his love. In the covenant of grace, the Father covenanted to pardon and justify his people upon the footing of what Immanuel was to do and perform. And in this covenant, the eternal Spirit undertook the work of revealing and glorifying Christ in the hearts of God's faithful people. And, it would be well for us, to know and consider, that the covenant-engagements between the Father and the Son are finished: the Father has given the Son to be a covenant for the people, and to live and die for them, and in their stead: and the Son has been incarnate—he has finished the work which the Father gave him to do, and is become the Author of their eternal salvation. And, all the blessings of the everlasting covenant are revealed and made known by the Holy Spirit, who is sent down from heaven, by the Father and the Son, to testify of Jesus, and to take of the things of Christ and to shew them unto us. It is much to be lamented, that the people of God do not put that honour upon the eternal Spirit, and upon his office which he deserves. Indeed, for want of a right apprehension of his sacred work and office, we go without many blessings and comforts, which are promised in the word. His office is to testify of Jesus. And he bears his testimony of Christ in the word, and what he has revealed of Christ in the word, he opens the *understanding to apprehend*. And the understanding being enlightened, by the Holy Spirit, to apprehend Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, the *will chooses*

*Christ* as its chiefest good, the *heart embraces Christ* as its only treasure, and its choice and chiefest portion ; *the conscience is brought* to an experimental acquaintance with the blood of the Lamb, and thus Christ is revealed in the soul as the hope of glory. Thus the Lord's people are brought to know their interest in Jesus, and in the Father's love. The Holy Spirit enabling them to believe on Christ, and to trust in his finished work, puts them into the actual possession and enjoyment of God's love, and of all the blessings of the Son's finished salvation. Hereby they enjoy the blessings of pardon, righteousness, peace, and everlasting life. They see in Christ, the Father reconciled unto them, and freely loving them, freely accepting them, and freely pardoning them, and at perfect and everlasting peace with them in the Beloved. This reconciles them in their hearts unto the Lord ; and from his shedding abroad his love in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and through his revealing himself unto his dear people in the Son of his Love, they are brought to the personal knowledge of his being the Lord their God, and this produces peace and love in their hearts. They have peace in their consciences arising from a belief of his being at perfect peace with them through the precious blood-shedding of his dear Son. And from hence springs love in their hearts, arising from their believing views of his everlasting love towards them in Christ Jesus. The people of God, under believing views, and from the



manifestations of his love towards them, and of his goodness unto them, shall say, "The Lord is my God." And in these words are contained the total sum of all blessedness. For, as the greatest blessing is contained in having God to be our covenant-God, so to be brought to know, to acknowledge, and to live upon him, as such, contains all blessedness in it. To have the Lord to be our God, to love us with everlasting love, to bless us with all spiritual blessings—to defend and shield us in time, and to be our exceeding great reward in glory—this is blessedness indeed!

May the Lord give us to seek after the enjoyment of it more and more. And may he be graciously pleased to bless what has been delivered.  
*Amen.*

## SERMON XVI.

**GOD'S RECOVERY OF HIS PEOPLE, THOUGH  
THEY HALT AND MAY BE DRIVEN OUT.**

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MICAH IV. 6, 7.

*In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; and I will make her that halted, a remnant, and her that was cast far off, a strong nation; and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion, from henceforth, even for ever.*

**T**HE infinite wisdom of God shines forth nowhere so bright and glorious as in his word. And the infinite wisdom of God discovered in the word, appears no-where so glorious as in the many, great, and precious promises, which he has been pleased to make unto his people: in which there is a wonderful discovery of the love of his heart towards his chosen, of the bowels of his mercy, and of his being ready to do, and bestow upon them, more than they can either ask, or think. In the chapter before us, we have an account of the glory and

peace of the Church of Christ: how that it should be established by the Lord, and highly exalted by him. And that under the gracious and blessed breathings of the Holy Ghost, souls being quickened and regenerated, should be calling upon and encouraging each other, to wait upon the Lord in his sacred appointments. This should be their language to each other, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob." (And as they were persuaded that this would be for their spiritual benefit, they add) "And he will teach us of his ways," "and we" (in the strength of Jesus our Captain of Salvation,) "will walk in his paths: for the law (*i. e.* the Gospel) shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." And, to shew their determination in the strength of the Lord, to follow on in his good ways, they make this confession at the 5th verse, "For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." Nothing should hinder or discourage them from openly professing their love to the Lord, and from walking in the name of the Lord their God; fetching their motives to walk with Him from his grace and mercy revealed unto them; and their strength to walk with him and in his ways from the fulness of Jesus. "We will walk" (which signifies their progress in divine things) "in the name of the Lord our God;" our covenant God and Father, "for ever and ever." And then follows the words of our text, "In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her

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**that** halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; and I will make **her** that halted, a remnant, and her that was cast far off, a strong nation; and the Lord shall reign over **them** in Mount Zion, from henceforth, even for **ever.**" The words are a promise made by the Lord unto his people; and, before I enter upon them, I would observe, that the people of God are brought **by** the divine teaching of the blessed Spirit, to a **practical** and experimental knowledge of themselves, and of the Lord, and also of the way and method of **salvation**, by the Lord Jesus Christ. They are led **to** see God in Christ everlastingly at peace with them, and that they are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has given them to see, and know, that he has led them to believe in the finished work of Jehovah Jesus, and by believing, he has brought them to experience, what it is to be at peace with God, by faith in Christ Jesus. They, trusting in the blood of sprinkling for pardon, and to the righteousness of Jesus for justification, see God at perfect peace with them; and this reconciles them unto God, and by the Spirit of adoption they are enabled to cry, Abba, Father. Now they set out to walk with their covenant God and Father, in order that they may enjoy his love and presence with them all the way to heaven. And the way in which they are to walk, is most exceedingly pleasant and delightful. For the way to heaven is Christ. I am the way, says Jesus, the truth, and the life. He

is *the* way, the *sole* way, and the only *right* way to the city of habitation.

And, while believers are walking in Christ the way, they meet with nothing but pleasure and delight. For, by walking in Christ the way, they meet God the Father with all the blessings of his love; and as Christ is our way to the Father, so Christ is likewise the Father's way unto us, wherein he is pleased to meet with us, and to refresh us with the blessings of his love and grace. Now, though in Christ the way to everlasting life, there is no kind of difficulty, nor danger; yet the Lord's people, in their attempts to walk in Christ the way to heaven, will meet with many things to distress them, and to hinder them in their walk. For it is very — hard to go on in a straight course, and for any length — of time — the hinderances will be many, and the opposition we shall meet with will be great, both from without and from within: so that believers would most certainly grow weary and faint in their minds, were it not for the blessed support the Lord is graciously pleased to give them from, and by means of his blessed promises.

The words before us, are a gracious declaration of the Lord's dealing with his children, after he has been pleased to bring them unto the knowledge of himself. Here is, first, a promise of grace made to those who are apt to halt in the good ways of God: "I will assemble her that halteth."

And, secondly, the Lord promiseth to "gather her that is driven out, and her, saith the Lord, that

I have afflicted." And, thirdly, follows what the Lord will do for them, and unto them. "And I will make her that halteth, a remnant, and her that was cast far off, a strong nation; and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion, from henceforth, even for ever." Let us, in the

First place, attend unto this promise of grace, made to those who are ready to halt in the good ways of God. And, to this end, let us consider what it is, which is the cause and reason why the Lord's people halt at times in his good ways. And, though there may be a variety of reasons assigned, yet the true principal one is, their legality and unbelief. Satan has a particular spite against the Lord's redeemed ones, and he shews it in his attacks upon their faith. He will be continually nibbling at the faith of believers, and endeavouring to weaken it: well knowing that if their faith is attacked and gives way, he shall be sure to gain some advantage over them; it being impossible to walk with God aright, any further than we are enabled to exercise faith on him as our Father in Jesus. Now, it is a common case and experience with the children of the Most High to find, that after they have been called to the knowledge of the truth, and have gone on in the good ways of God for some considerable time, through their own natural corruption which dwelleth in them, and through the temptations which they meet with from the world, the flesh and the devil, they are apt to grow cold in their affections, unto heavenly and divine things; which makes them say with holy Job, "Oh! that I were as in months

past, and as in the days when God preserved me, when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness." It is sometimes the case, that the best time of a Christian's life is, when he was first brought near unto the Lord by effectual calling. Then the soul is vigorous in its breathings after God—its heart and affections wholly set and fixed on divine things; and the day and season of its spiritual espousals to the Lord Jesus Christ, is accompanied with a most fervent and vehement love to Him—a great zeal for his honour and glory, and a great abhorrence of the very appearance of evil. And, indeed, it is much to be lamented by us, when we find an abatement in our love and affections towards the adorable and blessed Jesus. But this is too often the case, and the greatest Saint upon earth does find it to his great grief, that there is a continual propensity in our hearts to depart from the Lord, the Fountain of Living Waters; and the more watchful we are over ourselves, and the more acquainted we are with ourselves, the more we shall see and feel the truth of this, to our great grief and confusion. There is not one thing in the world, but strives to court our affections, and draw away our hearts from the Lord. And, the most holy persons find an evil heart of unbelief, which is always prone to put them upon departing from the living God, and, it is the case with some of the Lord's people, that there is for a season a partial revolt, and backsliding from him. Indeed, awful as it is, such has been the case with some, that after they have been brought under

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the bond of the covenant, and have given some proof, and made some appearance of their being in Christ the Tree of Life, by their bringing forth some of the buds and blossoms of profession ; yet they, left to themselves, have most awfully fallen from the Lord into open and scandalous sins : this is, when, and where, and unto whomsoever it happens, most awful. In general, it will be found, that the cause, which led to such dreadful backslidings from God has been, too great a dependance upon self and present attainments, and a secret neglect of holding communion with the Lord in the ordinances of his appointments. There should be, a daily going out of ourselves unto Christ, for fresh light, life, grace, and holiness. And, it is a thing of great moment to be attended unto by us, our having daily communion and fellowship with the Lord. For without it, though the means may be kept up, and accustomary performance of duties be practised by us, yet corruption, legality, and unbelief, will certainly thrive, and sooner or later we shall feel, the awful consequences of it in our souls.

When the people of God find and experience, how apt and ready they are to halt in the Lord's good ways ; and particularly, when they see and feel what unthought-of corruption there is in them, then they are apt to conclude that it is worse with them, and that their case is more deplorable than when they knew not the Lord. Every one of the Lord's people are led at some particular seasons, under very awful views and experiences, which they may have of themselves, to conclude their state



and case to be, far worse than it was before conversion.

Whereas, it is a most undoubted truth, God forbid you should abuse it, that no child of God can even be in so bad a state and case after conversion as he was before : and that for this reason. Before conversion, there was nothing in him but sin : his heart, and life, and state, were wholly sinful. But, by conversion, his state is altered, and he is made a partaker of a spiritual birth ; and, though spiritual life may at times scarcely appear ; nay, it may seem wholly to disappear ; yet, there being a spring of spiritual life in him notwithstanding all this, so the Lord will draw it forth into exercise, and make it manifestly appear, that he will never finally forsake the work of his hands, nor cease from working upon that person, in whom he has wrought the great work of regeneration—

It is much easier to revive, than to create. Regeneration is a new creation. And, though the power of God put forth to revive, restore, and renew his people, after spiritual decays and backslidings, be as great as it was to lift them at first out of a sinful state : yet now, there is a principle in the heart for the Lord to work upon, which was not there before, even a principle of grace, which himself infused in regeneration, and which sin itself can never extirpate.

Now, how gracious does the Lord, in the words before us, promise to deal with his dear people ! What grace is here, I will gather her that halteth ! Are any of you, sirs, sensible of your spiritual

haltings, and of your continual proneness to it? How must this promise serve to revive your hearts and encourage your souls to trust in the Lord! “I will, says the Lord, assemble her that halteth!” To hear his word, his soul-animating word, which is full of grace and truth, how reviving!—Hereby the Lord will make them that are ready to halt, and those who have halted in his good ways, to receive some blessed support and encouragement to hope in the Lord, and to triumph because of his word. The blessed use, which the Lord makes of his word to such persons, is as follows:—Those who are ready to halt, and are oppressed because of their spiritual haltings, are brought, by means of God’s presence and Spirit, to know and consider, that the Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. Their faith is, by this means revived, their hearts comforted, their hopes quickened, their fears are disarmed. And, from hence they receive some fresh encouragement to run in the ways of the Lord with fresh delight and alacrity.

The Lord is not unmindful of his people, nor of their cases, frames and experiences. And, as after the lowest ebb, follows the highest spring tide, so it is with believers. Oftentimes after the greatest discouragements and haltings, flows the highest spring-tide of spiritual and sensible joy, which fills the believer’s mouth with holy laughter, and his tongue with praise unto God.

Secondly, the Lord promiseth to gather her that is driven out, and her, says the Lord, that I have afflicted. The Lord’s people are sometimes, through

their own unbelief, and Satan's temptations, driven for a season from maintaining their confidence in God. Unbelief will present ten thousand reasons and arguments to beat the soul off from trusting in the free grace of God revealed in the word of promise. And the Lord's people have been at times so perplexed, and so sorely put to it, by means of Satan's working upon their unbelief, that they have uttered this mournful language, "My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord." Here then, we see the covenant-mercy of God towards his chosen. The Lord will gather his people in the arms of his promise, and embrace them with everlasting mercy—will draw near unto them in the day of their spiritual distress, and say unto them, "Fear not, I am thy salvation." The Lord will gather his people, which intimates his tenderness towards them. He will not drive, nor force them, but will allure, and most divinely draw them with a kind of omnipotent sweetness. He will gather them unto himself, and comfort them by the blessed discoveries of himself unto them. He will gather them unto Zion his Church, and cause them to hear and know the joyful sound of pardoning, restoring, and recovering mercy. And, the Lord will gather the afflicted. Here I would inquire, how it may be said, that the Lord afflicts his people? Now it is most true, that the people of God are represented in his word to be an afflicted people. Hence the Lord, in the prophecy of Zephaniah, speaks thus: "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." Indeed the

people of God are afflicted upon several accounts. Their indwelling sin is a very sore affliction unto them. It causes them to mourn, complain, and groan under it, crying out, as Paul did, “O wretched creatures that we are, who shall deliver us from the body of this death?” Satan, their sworn foe, by his fiery darts, and by the fierce assaults which he casts against, and makes upon them, afflicts them grievously.

And, sometimes the world persecutes them, and that with implacable malice. “For all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution;” and, “it is through much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of God.” As, when the angel asked John, concerning those who were surrounding the throne above, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, who they were? he replied, sir, thou knowest—and received this account concerning them:—“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” But, in these instances, it cannot be said that the Lord afflicts his people, though all this is by his permission. I should therefore choose to interpret this affliction, wherewith the Lord afflicts his people, of the chastisements which he sends upon his backsliding children, as a token of his displeasure against their sins. In the 89th Psalm, you have as glorious a display of the covenant of grace, and of God’s covenant-mercy towards his chosen ones, as can be found in all the book of God. And, after God the Father has most faithfully promised

his Son, as our Mediator, that, his seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven—He inserts this clause, “If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments: then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.” God, you see, sirs, has a rod of correction which he uses; and stripes which he inflicts upon his backsliding children. For, it is his invariable rule, “If ye will walk contrary unto me, saith God, then will I also walk contrary unto you.” Many of the Lord’s children have felt the smart of God’s rod, and have confessed that the Lord has shewn his exceeding great displeasure against them for their sins, insomuch, that they have read the evil of sin by the evil of punishment. For what greater affliction, or punishment, can the Lord’s called ones know, than to have God withdraw his presence, and the visible tokens of his favour from them, which he sometimes does upon the account of sin. And, though they may cry unto him, yet he seemeth to cover himself with a cloud, so that their prayer should not pass through.

Now, it should be here observed, that, this punishment or correction, is not the fruit of God’s hatred to the persons of his people, but to their sins. God’s love to the persons of his people, is an everlasting love; and his hatred, is not manifested against their persons, but against their sins. Indeed when he uses his rod, and lays on his stripes, even this is the fruit of covenant-mercy: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” The Lord promises to shew mercy

unto his afflicted ones ; to such, who, though they might have backslidden from him, and for their iniquity he had been wroth, and smote them with the correcting rod of covenant-affliction ; and from whom, he had for a season, hid himself ; yet here the Lord remembers them with everlasting kindness. “ Her, that I have afflicted,” shall again be comforted. Such words as these, contain in them everlasting consolation !—“ For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment ; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”

Such precious words as these, applied by the Holy Spirit to God’s afflicted ones, produce in them holy joy in the Lord, with peace of conscience, and brings them to loath themselves for their revoltings from the Lord, so that they cry out, “ What have I any more to do with idols ?” Under such discoveries of God’s covenant love and mercy, their sins receive a death-wound from the arm of the omnipotent Jesus, and their souls are divinely melted under such discoveries of the Lord’s mercy towards them. Indeed, it is a most wonderful promise which follows in the 89th Psalm. After God has declared what he will do, and how he will act towards his backsliding ones, He says, “ Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness

to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David :” that is, Jesus Christ the antitypical David, who is the head of the whole election of grace ; with whom the covenant was made, and by whom all the conditions of it have been performed, and from whom all the blessings of it are conveyed to the Lord’s chosen ones. Let us now take a view, in the

Third place, of what the Lord will do for and unto his people. “ And I will make her that halted, a remnant, and her that was cast far off, a strong nation. And the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth even for ever.” I will make her that halted, a remnant. God’s people are few in comparison of the rest of mankind, and they chiefly consist of the poor, and dregs thereof ; and they are often wonderfully preserved, when the wicked are cut off. Here the Lord, saying, I will make her that halted a remnant, implies, his gathering his halting ones back again to his fold, and making them visibly appear to belong to the little remnant whom Christ thus addresses, “ Fear not, little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” And indeed, it is a most blessed thing to be one of that little remnant whom the Lord has reserved unto himself and set apart for his own glory. For the Lord has chosen him that is godly for himself. God’s love made known and manifested unto his people, operates upon their hearts, and produces godliness in their lives, which makes it evident that they belong to the election

of grace ; holiness being the fruit of electing love. And, such persons are set apart by the Lord, to partake of his grace in time, and to enjoy his glory in eternity. He separates such from a vain conversation, calls them with an holy calling, and when they have foolishly and sinfully wandered from him, he graciously recovers and restores them. And, it is generally found that those who are recovered from a backsliding state, as they are brought thoroughly sensible that it is a bitter thing, and an exceeding great evil to forsake the Lord : so, when the Lord has made such as halted a remnant, and again established his covenant with them, and brought them to know him to be the Lord, then they remember their evil ways, and are confounded, and never open their mouth in self-vindication, when once the Lord is pacified towards them. And it is generally, if not universally, the case, that such persons for ever after, walk humbly with their God, and are more watchful, and jealous over themselves, and more upon their guard against the attacks of their spiritual foes, than ever. And, as the Lord brings them back, and makes them visibly appear to be the called according to his purpose, so he does wonderfully support them and divinely protect and guard them from their spiritual foes. He will, as the Lord of Hosts, as the God of his people, be as a wall of fire round about them to protect and defend them ; and their glory in the midst of them, by affording them his gracious presence, and pouring out his Spirit upon them. The Lord will make her that halted, a remnant, and her that was cast far off,



a strong nation. The Lord may seem, at times, by his dispensations towards his people, and especially with his backsliding ones, to carry it as though he had cast them far off, though this is in reality never the case, neither can it possibly be. And the Lord speaks here unto his people, according to their apprehensions. Indeed, so far the Lord does cast them far off, as to cease from holding for a season divine fellowship with them; and which is a great loss unto them, so that when he is pleased to draw near again unto them, and cause his goodness and his glory to pass before them, they cannot but most thankfully adore him for it. God's people are here promised to be made a strong nation. They are compared to a nation, and called by the Lord, an holy nation, because they are separated from the rest of mankind, and are devoted unto the service and worship of the Lord. They have God's holy word and ordinances for their rule and direction, and God's Holy Spirit to be their guide. They are called unto holiness, and it is highly becoming them to be holy in all manner of conversation. Peter speaking unto believers, writes thus, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; (and if it be asked to what end or purpose? the answer is,) that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." The Lord here promises, to make his people strong. The children of God are in themselves weak indeed; and it is well for them, when they are truly sensible of it. For then they will be led to renounce themselves,

*though they halt and may be driven out.* 371

and trust wholly in the Lord, for his promised strength. We can never suspect ourselves too much, nor trust in ourselves too little. Neither can we ever too confidently rely upon the Lord Jesus for strength, for the Lord's people never trust in themselves, but they are always overcome. There were two men who made a profession of religion, and they lived in the country, and it was in persecuting times. The one of them was a very confident man, and the other was a very timorous one. They were both of them, on account of their profession of Christ, taken up and carried to London, and confined as prisoners in Newgate. And, while they were there, the poor timorous man expressed his fears: he was heartily fearful of himself, lest he should not hold out to go unto the stake for Christ. The confident man says, you shall see this fat flesh of mine fry in the fire for Christ. The Lord made a trial of them. And the poor timorous man, who was fearful and distrusting himself went to the stake, and burnt cheerfully for Christ; while the confident man renounced Christ, and turned apostate.

This, sirs, was, and will be the fruit and effect of trusting in ourselves; whereas, if we renounce ourselves, and trust only in the Lord we shall have always strength equal to our day. One of old, whose trust was in the Lord, spake thus: "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer: my God, my strength in whom I will trust, my buckler and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I

be saved from mine enemies." When we renounce all dependance on our own strength, and rely wholly on the strength of the Lord, and trust and stay upon his arm, then we are sure to be successful against the host of hell which cometh against us. The Apostle writing to the Saints at Ephesus, says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." And when we are strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, then, though the malice and force of hell should be collected together at once against us, we shall certainly prevail, in the strength of the Great Captain of salvation. It is much to be observed by us, how the Apostle Paul prays for believers, that they may be strengthened. You have him in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, praying unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, "That he would grant, you according to the riches of his glory," and to the praise of the glory of it, that his believing people might "be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." The Lord, you see, strengthens his people with might by his Spirit in the inner man. He does not make them strong in themselves, but he strengthens them with might by his Spirit in the inner man. Paul, speaking to Timothy, says, "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." He does not put him upon being strong in inherent grace. No. For inherent grace is not a self-acting principle. Sin, alas! is. That acts, and it is self-acting: but grace in us, no further acts, than it is acted upon. The Holy Spirit who

has wrought grace in the soul, must draw it forth into act and exercise. And we are dependant upon the Holy Spirit for every act of spiritual life. The Lord strengthens his people with might by his Spirit, and the Lord brings his people unto the knowledge of it, that they may give him his praise and glory for it. The Lord does not save his people in the dark; but he makes them sensible how much they need his strength, that when he puts it forth in them, and for them, they may admire and adore him for it. We are kept, says one, who found the need of God's strength to keep him, as much as ever any man did; "we are kept by the mighty power of God, through faith." The mighty power of God is put forth to work faith in us; and it is the same mighty power, which God put forth to raise Christ from the grave—to raise the human nature of Christ from earth to heaven, and to exalt it at the right hand of God, which is put forth to keep the believer while he is on his journey unto the city of the living God. God will never cease putting forth his mighty power until he has brought the members, and exalted them to the same glory, in their manner and measure, which their Head is exalted unto.

Where I am, says Jesus, there shall ye be also. One would think, that to be kept by the power of God, should have enough in it for the support of faith, but it is added, we are kept by the *mighty* power of God. It is the might of God's power which is put forth to keep us.

And we are kept by the mighty power of God through faith. The believer has by faith a view of the mighty power of God whereby he is kept, and this enables him to triumph in the Lord. He sees that he is kept, and shall be kept through and by the mighty power of God ; unto full, final, and eternal salvation. The more this is eyed, the more we shall be led to glorify God. The way whereby the Lord strengthens us with strength in our souls, is by bringing us to meditate upon his blessed promises, and we enjoy the strength promised, and by relying upon the promiser, we thereby engage the Lord's faithfulness to make us partakers of his promised strength. It is good for us to be taking a view of the mighty power of God, by surveying how God has put forth the acts of it, in his various dispensations for the use and benefit of his people in all ages that are past. We should look at God's power whereby we are kept, and rejoice in it. Thus did David : " I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Jerusalem was surrounded with hills, and the temple stood upon one, hence it is called the Mountain of the Lord's House. And David's lifting up his eyes unto the hills, signifies his looking unto the Lord for help. And therefore it follows ; my help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved : " he that keepeth thee will not slumber." Behold, " He that keepeth Israel, shall neither slumber, nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper."

A sight of our own weakness ought always to have this effect upon us, to drive to, and cause us to trust more and more in the strength of the Lord; And it is most blessed when the believer learns to make continual use of Jesus as his strength. This is the confession of the Church, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." The Lord is the strength of his people, and he works all their works in them and for them. The Lord will make her that was cast far off, a strong nation; by fixing them firmly upon Christ the Rock, by keeping them steadfastly dependant upon him, and by putting forth the might of his power, to make them strong in himself. And he adds, "And the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion, from henceforth, even for ever." By Mount Zion, we are to understand the Church of Christ.

And, as Zion, or the Temple, was built upon an hill, so the Church is built upon this impregnable rock, the person, incarnation, blood, and righteousness of Jehovah Jesus; against which the gates of hell shall never be able to prevail. Christ is the only King of Zion. He has his throne here. And in his temple doth every one speak of his glory. His dear people are the inhabitants of Zion. Here they dwell, and are refreshed with the Lord's blessed presence; for here the Lord commands his blessing, his spiritual blessing, even life for evermore. And the Lord rules over them, and rules in them by the power and sceptre of his grace. Jesus, the King of Zion, is higher than the kings of the earth, for he is

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. And he exceeds all the kings of the earth in this particular ; they reign by him, and by him decree justice, and they sometimes make good and wholesome laws for their subjects, but they cannot write their laws upon the hearts of their subjects. But, Jesus the King of Zion can he not only can give laws unto his subjects, but he can, and he likewise does, write these laws upon their hearts. And he makes all his people, a willing and an obedient people. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness." The Lord rules and reigns in the hearts of his people ; his love sweetly draws them, his beauties divinely attract them, and under the influences of divine grace, they run with great delight in the Lord's ways. And, as the Lord reigns in them, so he likewise reigns over them, to preserve, govern, protect, and secure them. And the Lord promises to reign over them in Mount Zion, from henceforth, even for ever. This will be the case, and it will more fully appear, when all the ends of the world shall remember themselves, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him. This will, according to many prophecies in the sacred word, be one day the case. And what can hinder it ? For the kingdom is the Lord's : and he is the governor among the people. Jesus Christ, the King of Zion, is the King of Nations, as well as King of Saints. He is crowned in heaven as Zion's lawful Sovereign. Upon his return from earth to heaven, after his triumphant

victory over all the enemies of his peoples's salvation, he was seated upon his mediatorial throne, the Father saying unto him, "I have set" thee as "my King upon my holy hill of Zion." And his kingdom, as God-man. Mediator, is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endureth throughout all generations. His believing people may well shout, saying, the Lord is King, Jehovah Jesus is King, the earth may be glad thereof; yea, the multitude of the isles may be glad thereof. For he enriches all his subjects, and most gloriously adorns them with the robe of righteousness and garments of salvation. He makes them partakers of his unsearchable riches. And they are heirs of God and joint heirs with him. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things. And I will be his God, and he shall be my son." The Lord reigns in Mount Zion, in the hearts of his people, and he reigns over them to protect and defend them, both in their bodies and souls. And, as the hills stand round about Jerusalem, even so the Lord standeth round about his people from henceforth, even for ever; and he will preserve his people unto his heavenly kingdom of glory. Christ's Church is even here below a banqueting house, and his people in this lower world, often partake by faith of the joys above.

They find one day in God's courts better than a thousand; and sit down under the shadow of his protection with great delight. But, all these blessings, which they enjoy here, are scarce sufficient to



give them the least view and foretaste of the glory that is to be revealed.

Here they have the comfort of Christ's presence, of the tokens of his love, and have a sight of him through the galleries of his ordinances; and they know that he reigns over their enemies, so that none of them shall ever finally prevail against them. And, the blessed views they have, of Christ's sending forth his Gospel throughout the whole world, is animating and quickening unto them—they cannot but long for the time when all nations shall fall down before him, and all kingdoms shall do him service. But a prospect of the kingdom of glory; this is unspeakably reviving, where God shall be their everlasting glory. *Amen.*

# SERMON XVII.

THE LORD THE REFUGE FOR THE OPPRESSED.

PSALM IX. 9, 10.

*The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee : for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.*

**T**HE Sacred Scriptures, give us an exact account of the dealings of the Lord, towards his people; how he is pleased to bring them to the knowledge of themselves, and to an acquaintance with his blessed self—how he begins the work of his grace upon their hearts; and how he carries it on, in spite of all opposition; and supports them under their various conflicts with sin and Satan; and brings them off at last, more than conquerors. The Lord is represented in the word, as doing his people good, and nothing but good. All his paths towards them, in nature, providence, and grace, are mercy and truth. The book of Psalms contains a rich treasury of the experiences of God's people, in all sorts of

cases, and under all sorts of distresses, and trials, whether from without or from within. And we have in it, an account of the blessed supports, which the Lord is pleased to give his people, and of the deliverances he is pleased to work for them. Here we may see, how God takes occasion from his people's cases and distresses, to appear for them—to supply them—to comfort them—and, how faithfully he fulfils his holy word and promise unto them! And, did we study our own experience more, and consider attentively the Lord's dealings towards us, and compare them with the experiences of God's Saints recorded in the Bible, it would greatly encourage us in the Lord our God, to go on in his good ways. The book of Psalms may be considered as a sacred memorial of God's dealings with his people. There are two things which require our study. The first<sup>e</sup> is, our own experience, and God's dealings with us. The second is, the word of God. By studying our own experience, and viewing the Lord's dealings with us, we shall be brought to see what God hath done for us; and thereby be the better fitted and disposed, to apply the word and promises of God to our own souls. And hereby we shall see, the goodness of God, who has suited his word exactly to answer all the various cases of his dear people.

From the words of our text, we may observe the following particulars:

First, that the Lord's people are at times oppressed.

Secondly, that the Lord will be a refuge for them, and that, in times of trouble.

Thirdly, what those will do in times of trouble, who know the Lord's name; they will trust in him.

And fourthly, the reason of it. "For thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee."

From the text it appears, that God's people are at times oppressed. Nor need this seem strange. For though the Lord's people, are beloved by him, yet they are objects of the world's hatred, and Satan's malice. When the Lord is pleased to begin his work of grace upon the soul, Satan immediately begins to oppose: hence, from the unusual struggles and conflicts the soul is exercised with, the work of grace appears to be begun upon the heart. For, as at the present conversion of a soul to God, there is joy in heaven; so there is upon the same account, and at the same time, a great consternation in hell.

The enemy of souls, immediately begins to try, by all ways, and means, to hinder the sinner's escape out of his hands: and, upon finding the soul, through the omnipotent power of God, got from under his dominion; he then makes use of every effort, to hinder and oppose the soul in its march towards Mount Zion, the city of the living God. The great enemy of souls, will, and does oppress the Lord's people, in such ways, and by such means as these. He will try to keep their souls from Jesus Christ, by suggesting unto them the number, greatness, and aggravation of their sins, and thereby

he will aim to bring them to despair. At other times he will solicit them with all his might to the commission of sin, by representing outward objects unto them, in order to stir up the corruptions of their hearts, and draw them forth. And, if he does not by these prevail, he will suggest unto the soul, its coldness, deadness, and unprofitableness, in order to weaken the confidence of the child of God. And he will be, night and day, trying his conclusions, and experiments, upon the soul that is born of God. The Lord's people are not only oppressed by the devil, who is up in arms against them, but they are likewise oppressed upon the account of what they see, and feel, and find in themselves. The work of God upon the soul, discovers what vile creatures we are by nature. When the Holy Spirit begins his work upon us, he always begins it, by convincing us of sin : and gives us to see sin, to be the 'greatest of all evils.

He discovers unto us, the damnable nature, and horrid pollution of it ; and he brings us to know and feel, that in us dwelleth nothing that is good. It is the description given of the Lord's people, that they "know, every man, the plague of his own heart." And this is a discouraging sight. It causeth the soul to groan being burdened with a body of sin and death ; and to cry out with Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?"

It produces deep humility of soul, as it did in the poor publican : and his prayer becomes our own, when we are truly quickened, "God be merciful to

me a sinner." The Lord's people are likewise oppressed by the world, which lieth in wickedness. The sins of others, are an affliction to the godly. It was so to *Lot*, whose righteous soul was grieved, upon the account of the sins of others. It was the case with *David*, who says, "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." Now, the Lord's dear people, are the only ones, that are thus oppressed. For, though the whole world lieth in wickedness, or in the arms of the wicked one, yet they feel not their misery: they know not their state, and that the end of these things is death; eternal death: but quickened persons, who feel themselves to be fallen creatures, souls who are born of God and taught of him, are made experimentally acquainted with these things, and are often oppressed under a sight and sense of them. This leads us,

Secondly, to consider, that the Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. When the Lord is pleased to discover unto his people the miseries of a natural state, the corruption and horrid pollution of their natures, and the malice of their spiritual enemies; it is in order to recommend and endear, his grace and love unto them. And blessed be his most holy name; he is a refuge for his people, to protect them from the rage of the devil; from the malice of the world, and from the condemnatory sentence of the holy law. The blood of Jesus, is applied by the Father, to cleanse his people from all their sins, from all their guilt, and from all their filth. The righte-

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ousness of Jesus is set forth by the Father, in the word, as the Robe of Salvation, with which he clothes his poor returning prodigals. The rich, and free mercy of God, is by him, discovered in his promises, and by his Spirit, applied to the hearts of his oppressed, contrite ones. The heart of God is open to receive, the arms of God are open to embrace, all poor, weary, heavy laden sinners. And Jesus Christ says unto them, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Christ himself is divinely appointed, anointed, and qualified for this work. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon him, and hath anointed, and qualified him for this work; and sent him to preach glad tidings to the meek, (that is, to the poor in spirit) and to comfort all that mourn. All the holy mourners in Zion, are interested in the comfort, which Christ is appointed, by his Father, to administer unto them. He is sent to bind up the broken-hearted: to preach deliverance to his people, who feel themselves bound with the chains of their sin and unbelief. And, whatsoever their oppressors, or oppressions are, he is divinely suited to relieve them, and to break in pieces the oppressor. And here is a promise that he will do this. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed. He will do for his people, above what they can think, or ask; "and, as their day, so shall their strength be." "He will not leave them, nor forsake them." Their needs and necessities, shall serve, as a proper occasion, for the Lord to succour them, and when they are ready to cry out and say, "My hope and

my trust is perished from the Lord;" he will at such times remarkably appear for them. Here it may be necessary to inquire, what those times of trouble are, which the godly are supposed to be in? They are, those various dispensations of Providence, and exercises of soul, which the Lord, for wise reasons, is pleased to try them with. Sometimes God, in his providential dispensations, is pleased to take such a course, as seems, in the eye of carnal reason to be, and make against them. And which causes his people to think, and say as Jacob did in a like case, "All these things are against me." Though this always arises from our ignorance and unbelief: yet when we go into the sanctuary, and look into the Scriptures, then we say, "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works," of providence, as well as grace. And sooner or later, we find, as well as believe, that "all things" in Providence "work together for good to them that love God." Sometimes, the people of God are in trouble, and continue long in trouble, being oppressed in their souls, from this cause: they found, when they were first turned to the Lord, a holy abhorrence in their souls against all sin. They were led, with weeping and supplications, to the Lord their God. They sought God with their whole hearts, and intreated him to subdue their iniquities. He was pleased to hear their prayer, and to send them a gracious answer. They found their souls stayed upon God—their hearts going out after him, and their lusts and corruptions powerfully



subdued. But alas! it is sometimes the experience of the child of God, that, that sin which he has most heartily bewailed, before the Lord, and which he has been most humbled for, and which he hoped had been crucified and put to death; in spite of all opposition, shews itself, and it causes the soul to tremble. The believer never expected to be tried in *this* manner, with the like sins, and to be exercised just in this manner; and from such conflicts is ready to cry out, if I am a child of God, “Why am I thus? How is it that it is thus with me?” Now, this is a time of trouble. And the Lord will be a refuge unto his people at such a time—and he does in such a season, when the soul is overwhelmed with sights of sin, and corruption, send some word of promise unto his people, and by applying it unto their hearts, by his Holy Spirit, thereby he sets their souls at liberty. God’s end in all this, is, to bring us more out of ourselves, to rely upon, and look unto the Lord Jesus alone. It is a time of trouble, to the child of God, when the Lord is pleased to withdraw his sensible presence from him: and, under the hidings of his countenance, the soul cannot but say with holy Job, “Oh, that I were as in months past as in the days when God preserved me, when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness.” This brings the soul, thus exercised, to long more earnestly, and pray more fervently for the presence of God, and by these various experiences, God brings his people out of themselves—empties them of their self-sufficiency

—brings them to abhor themselves in dust and ashes, and to cry out, “Behold, I am vile.” And hereby they are led to wonder at God’s love and grace towards such dunghill-worms—such hell-deserving creatures, as they feel themselves to be. Thus they are brought, (seeing and feeling so much of their fallen nature) by the Eternal Spirit, to rest upon the Lord Jesus for “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” The Lord is a refuge unto them in times of trouble, as he secretly supports them, and supplies them with his grace; and as he sends his holy word, in a very seasonable manner to relieve their souls. This leads us, to the

Third particular, namely, to consider, what those will do, in times of trouble, who know the *Lord’s name*. They will trust in him. We have considered the goodness of God, in being a refuge to his people, in their times of trouble. And if we consider the deep distress, and soul conflicts, which God’s people are sometimes exercised with, we shall find, that none but the Lord alone, can be their refuge, and their hope. When the Holy Spirit is pleased to give us a view of the fountain of our corrupt nature, we then should eternally despair, was it not that he is pleased, at the same time, to lead us to take a view of the almighty Saviour. And, though we are not always sensible of this, yet, it is an infallible truth, that all the discoveries the Holy Spirit gives us of ourselves, are in order to unhinge us of ourselves, to remove us off from our own bottom, and lead us to rest wholly, and only upon Christ’s righteousness and blood, for pardon, and justifi-

cation, and upon Him for sanctification and eternal life. Whosoever is taught of God, knows, that he is long in learning this lesson in the school of Christ, practically, and experimentally. We are all in hopes, when we first come to Jesus, that we shall find that in ourselves, sooner or later, which will comfort us, and give us confidence towards God. The divine change wrought in our souls, by the word and Spirit of God; and the delight we take in the ordinances of the Lord, serve for a long season to support us: but, when the Lord is pleased to give us a more thorough sight of ourselves; then, those comforts, which came into our souls, from the change wrought in ourselves, are gone; and, being brought to feel more of our sin and sinfulness, we are led to look abroad for help and succour. The blessed Spirit, then leads us more to the word of God; he opens our understandings, and applies to our hearts, what the Scriptures testify of Jesus.

And he leads us, under sights and views of what we are, to the rock which is higher than ourselves. We then see the need of that complete salvation which the Son of God has wrought out for sinners and of looking to that blessed and immaculate Lamb every moment. We then find no hope, nor help in ourselves, and therefore see the need of the long robe of Christ's obedience, to hide all our deformities from view; and of his most precious blood, and its continual application to our hearts. We see the need of looking to the love of Christ—to the willingness of Christ—to the power and ability of Christ—and to the all-sufficient fulness of Christ, to

support, encourage, and comfort our souls under a sight and sense of what we see, and feel ourselves to be.

Here we may observe the goodness of the Holy Spirit, in bringing us to a more experimental knowledge of ourselves, in order to bring us to a more experimental knowledge of Christ. All that we know of Christ, is from God's word, and by his Spirit. And the Holy Spirit makes use of the word, in order to reveal Christ unto us, in all that he does in us, and upon us. When he convinces us effectually of sin, and brings us to mourn for it, after a godly sort, it is by giving us a view of Christ as pierced: and those who see Christ by faith, their hearts are likewise pierced, and they mourn; as one that mourneth for an only son. If he comforts us, it is by applying the balm of Gilead, the blood of Christ to the conscience. If he strengthens us, and encourages us, it is by discovering Christ and his salvation. Indeed, as all the believer's real comfort flows from Christ; so it is by beholding Him, as set forth in the word, that he enjoys peace with God, by faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord his righteousness, and his atonement. "They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee." We must first know Christ, before we can believe: and our faith is in proportion to our knowledge of Him. Here we see, that those who know God's name, are set forth as persons who will trust in him. It appears, that from their knowing his name, they are encouraged to trust in him; and therefore, let us inquire, what there is, in the name of the Lord, which may encourage his people to trust in him. Now we find

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the Lord's name recorded in Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7, and his name is, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin." And this name, or discovery of the Lord, which he has been pleased to make of himself in the word, for the comfort of his people, we cannot but observe that there is every thing contained in it, which may serve to encourage those who know it, to trust in him. Are the people of God brought to know, feel, and experience their own weakness and helplessness? Here is a sanctuary in the name of the Lord for them. He is the Lord, and "will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." Surely here is a blessed asylum for relief to be found by God's dear people. In this glorious name of the Lord our God, (believers) we may well shelter ourselves, and find comfort, under all our conflicts and distresses. Here is mercy with the Lord, to be exercised towards us, and therefore we may well hope in Jehovah's mercy; yea, here we may have our unbelief removed.

For what is it that chiefly troubles us, that most discourages us? You will say, our sins and sinfulness. Look then to the name of the Lord, and you will find this one part of his most glorious name, that he pardoneth iniquity, transgression and sin. From hence it appears that the name of the Lord is a strong tower, and the righteous runneth into it and are safe. Believers, read this name of your God and Father in Jesus. Study it well, and you will

find, that the more the Holy Ghost leads you to the knowledge of it, your hearts will be strengthened, your faith supported, your hope confirmed, and you will be encouraged to go on in the good ways of God.

The people of God, who know his name, will put their trust in him. And here, let us observe, that there is nothing in God's name—nothing in God's nature—nothing in God's covenant—nothing in God's word, but does, and should encourage the Lord's people, when they take a proper view of it, to trust confidently on him. This brings us,

Fourthly, to consider the reason given in our text, for so doing. "For thou Lord hast not forsaken them that seek thee." This is a great, as well as a good reason, why believers should trust in the Lord; and why they should go on still to trust in him. The faithfulness of God in fulfilling, as well as the goodness of God in making his promises, should be eyed by us. All his promises in Christ Jesus, are yea, and *Amen*. They were all made to Christ for us. They were all fulfilled to Christ, as the covenant-head of his people; and he is in the possession of all the good contained in them, that he may communicate it unto us.

And they are all "in him, yea, and *Amen*, unto the glory of God." The Lord himself is glorified in fulfilling and making good his promises, unto all that trust in him. Here I might say, "Look unto the generations of old, and see; did any trust in the Lord and were forsaken?" No. He never said unto the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain. He

was with his people in *Egypt*, and brought them up from under the oppression of the Egyptians ; and led them safely through the wilderness—went before them in a pillar of a cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night. And he was with them by day and night, and upon all the glory there was, is, and shall be a defence. He is the defence of his people, and he counts them his glory.

He was with the three Hebrew youths, which were cast bound into the burning fiery furnace for his name's sake. The Son of God made one with them, and so preserved them, that the smell of fire did not pass upon them. He was with Daniel in the lions' den, and sent his angel to stop the lions' mouths that they should not hurt him. He was with Jonah in the whale's belly, and heard his cry, though it was from the belly of hell. And, he not only heard, but likewise sent, and wrought deliverance. He was with our English martyrs, so that they triumphed in the midst of the flames, and one of them said, "Look, ye Papists, ye are for miracles, behold, I feel no more pain, than though I were on a bed of down !" And the Lord is still the same to his people. He has never forsaken them : but their extremity, is always his opportunity. "The Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people ;" saith Samuel. Oh ! that you may never forget that God is faithful to his promise, and almighty to fulfil it ! He has connected his own glory, and his people's good so closely together ; that what advances the one, promotes the other. . . .

Every past dispensation of God's goodness towards his people, loudly proclaims this truth; and should mightily serve to strengthen our faith. "Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." Take this for an encouragement. If there be any of you brought to seek after the Lord, though at present your desires may be very weak, and you scarcely know what you want; yet if God has been pleased, to bring you in any measure to seek and inquire after him; be encouraged with this, "The Lord will not forsake those that seek him." He will go on to reveal and make himself more and more known unto you; and your hearts shall live that seek God. And you, who have had long acquaintance with the Lord, go on in his strength, to trust more and more in him; assuring yourselves, that he will be with you at all times—that he will be with you in sickness, and death; and that you shall one day be with the Lord, and enjoy him as your portion for ever. *Amen.*



# SRRMON XVIII.

## PAUL'S ADMIRATION OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF FREE GRACE.

ROMANS XI. 33.

*Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !*

**T**HESE words are a devout exclamation, uttered by the Apostle upon his surveying the eternal decrees and purposes of God, concerning those deep and tremendous truths, respecting eternal election and rejection.

He had been treating of God's eternal choice and appointment of some to life, and of his passing by others and leaving them to the mutability of their wills, which becoming sinful by the fall, God left them to their sinful lusts, for which they become liable to eternal death, which they are appointed to for their own sins. He gives several instances of this doctrine, as in the case of *Esau* and *Jacob*, of whom before they were born, and when as yet they

and done neither good nor evil ; “ that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth ; it was said, the elder shall serve the younger.” As it is written, “ Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” This doctrine of God’s sovereignty being cavilled at by carnal persons, causes Paul to personate an objector, raising objections against it, which he answers, and establishes the doctrine more firmly thereby. He proceeds, in this chapter before us, to prove the truth of his former assertions, by observing and illustrating Jehovah’s dealing with the Israelites, of which he himself was one.

It was a great trial of his faith indeed, to see that so many great and glorious promises should be made to the Jewish nation, respecting the *Messiah*, and the spiritual blessings which were to come by him, were generally mistaken by them : they, looking more at the letter of the promise, than at the spirituality of it ; insomuch, that though Christ appeared with all the marks, and wrought all the miracles and works foretold concerning Him—yet they, blinded with ignorance, and filled with prejudice, renounced the Great Prophet who was to come into the world. In consequence of which the bulk of them, as a nation, were rejected by the Lord, and his glorious Gospel was removed from them, and sent amongst the Gentiles, whereby those, who were in darkness and the shadow of death, saw great light breaking forth on them ; yea, everlasting light, and were enlightened by it.

The Church, to which this epistle was directed, being made up, both of Jews and Gentiles, who were believers in Jesus Christ, and were joined to the Lord, and to each other by the will of God, our Apostle endeavours to unite their hearts most firmly together, by setting before them, how they were equally, and alike, indebted to the free sovereign grace of God. He would have the believing Jews know, that the word of God was effectual—that the promises of God were immutably true—that they had been in part fulfilled:—what had already befallen them, and would in future times, when all Israel should be saved, was written and foretold by the Prophets, and they had lived to see it in part accomplished. As it respected the believing Gentiles, he would have them not be high-minded but fear—nor to insult the unbelieving Jews, but adore the inscrutable will—wisdom—and providence of God concerning them:—observing God's promise concerning their future faith, and conversion—it being written in the prophecy of Isaiah—“There shall come out of Zion, the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them (saith the Lord) when I shall take away their sins.” He observes further, that though, as touching the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; yet, they could not bear that salvation should be preached to them, for as touching the election (there being an elect number amongst them) they are beloved for the Father's sake. “For the gifts and callings of God are without repen-

tance. For as ye (meaning the Gentiles) in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy." Seeing the unbelief of the Gentiles was no bar to their obtaining mercy, and that through the incredulity of the Jews, it cannot therefore be thought, that the present blindness, hardness of heart, enmity, and unbelief, which now attend the Jews, can be any obstacle to their obtaining mercy in the same way the Gentiles have; but as the one have been, the other also will be visited with surprising grace! "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all, the whole election of grace." God finds them in their natural state, shut up in unbelief as in a prison, and he says to the prisoners, the elect, among both Jews and Gentiles, whom he finds in this state, "Go forth and shew yourselves." He makes them sensible of their guilty state, and he exerciseth his mercy towards them, in bringing them out of it.

Upon a survey of which the Apostle breaks forth, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

It will be my design, in preaching from these words, to open to your view the treasures of rich, free, and sovereign grace, manifested in eternal election before all time—discovered by the redemption of the chosen ones in time—and which is manifested

unto them, in their effectual calling and perseverance to eternal glory.

I shall not lay down any particular division of my text, but will endeavour to explain and enlarge upon it, as the Lord the Spirit shall be pleased to give light and utterance. Only, I would premise, in addition to what hath been delivered, that Paul is here wading in the deep waters of the sanctuary, and finds the love of God to be an unfathomable ocean, where all his thoughts are drowned, perplexed, and swallowed up! He enters deep into the eternal love—mercy—and grace of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and cries out, overwhelmed with the incomprehensible nature of the subject—Oh, the depth!”

The first thing I will contemplate, shall be the sovereignty of God, discovered in his purposes, decrees, and council, concerning creatures, and their state, and condition, both as it respects time, and eternity.

Jehovah is the first cause, and last end of all things. His essence and existence are of and from himself. He is Jehovah, the self-existing essence. The fountain of life, and essential blessedness: “The King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, who alone hath immortality, dwelling in that light to which no mortal eye can approach.” To whom nothing can be added.

And throughout a vast eternity, the Eternal Three, have enjoyed boundless, incomprehensible blessedness, in the enjoyment and contemplation of those essential perfections which belong to Father,

Son, and Spirit, the everlasting Jehovah: who is his own eternity, and cannot receive any addition to his own essential happiness or glory, by all, or any of his creatures.

He is exalted above all blessing and praise. The whole creation before him, and as viewed by him, is less than nothing and vanity! And, if any should curiously inquire, What was God engaged in before he stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth? The answer is, The blessed, co-equal, and co-essential Three, Father, Son, and Spirit, had a mutual inbeing and society together, and were essentially blessed in that divine eternal life, in the mutual interest; or propriety they have in each other, in mutual love and delight—as also in the possession of one common equal, glory, and blessedness.

But, as it is the nature of goodness to be communicative of itself, so it pleased the Eternal Trinity to purpose, and to go forth into creature acts. The creation of all things is attributed in Scripture to divine sovereignty. “Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” Nothing out of God can move him, or be a motive to him. His will is his rule. His glory his ultimate end. “For of him,” as the first cause, and “*through him*,” as the preserving cause, “*and to him*,” as the final cause, “are all things: to whom be glory for ever. *Amen.*”

God in his actual creation of all, is the end of all. “The Lord hath made all things for himself.” And the sovereignty of God naturally ariseth from the

relation of all things to himself as their creator, and their natural and inseparable dependance upon Him, in regard of their being, and well-being.

He had the being of all things in his own will and power, and it was at his own pleasure, whether he would impart it or not ; and therefore he had a right to dispose of every thing in heaven and earth, and to order all things *after the council of his own will.*

“ In him we live and move, and have our being.” He himself proclaims his sovereignty over heaven and earth in these words—“ Thus saith God the Lord, He that created the heavens and stretched them out, He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it, He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein.” Indeed, all created being is but shadow—God himself only is BEING, SUBSTANCE, and EXISTENCE. The Psalmist, as the herald of the Lord of Hosts, saith—“ Whatsoever the Lord pleased that did he in heaven and earth, in the sea, and in all deep places.” And if you would read a lecture, upon the power, dominion, and sovereignty of Jehovah, I would refer you to those discourses, with which the Most High interrogated Job, in the 38th and following chapters, which gives us such discovery of his Majesty, as one would think should cause us to cry out with devout rapture, “ Who would not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy !” But, I proceed to consider, that as the creation of all things was according to his pleasure, so his will purposing and decreeing all things, founded upon

his entire foreknowledge of whatsoever should come to pass, is such a display of his sovereignty, as may well cause us to cry out, "O the depth!"

"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world," *i. e.* from eternity. He comprehends and grasps all things in his infinite understanding. As he hath an incomprehensible essence, to which ours is but as the drop of a bucket, so he hath an incomprehensible knowledge, to which ours is but as a grain of dust. He knows his own essence—goodness—power—all his perfections—decrees—intentions—acts; yea, the infinite capacity of his own understanding. His primitive decree, and view, in the creation of heaven and earth, angels and men, being his own glory; and that which gave foundation to it, and was the basis to support it, was Jehovah's designs to exalt his co-equal and co-eternal Son, as God-man, who was to be the foundation and corner-stone of the whole creation of God. The ever blessed and incomprehensible God, had never gone forth into creature-acts, had not the second person, in the self-existing essence, condescended by the assumption of our nature, to become a creature. Though this took place after the fall, yet the decree concerning it was before the fall, agreeably to a noted maxim among divines, that "that which is first in intention is last in execution." Jesus Christ, God-man, the Fellow of the Lord of Hosts, was the first of all the ways of God. "The Lord possessed him in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old." He was considered as God-man before the world was, and as such, *was the*



*first-born of every creature*, being the Lord, Creator of every creature. "For, by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him." He is the Creator, and upholder of all creation, visible, and invisible. It is in this sense I apprehend these words of the Apostle, that "God created all things by Jesus Christ." He, as God-man, had a virtual influence, and was the executor of all the works, and will of God.

Lest I should not express myself upon so deep a subject with sufficient precision, I shall quote the following passage from Sir Francis Bacon :—"I believe (says he) that God is so holy, pure, and jealous, that it is impossible for him to be pleased in any creature, though the work of his own hands; so that neither angels or man, could stand before him, or can stand one moment in his eyes, without beholding them in the face of a Mediator: and therefore, before Him with whom all things are present, the Lamb of God was slain before the world was; without which eternal purpose of his, it was impossible for him to have descended to any work of creation, but He should have enjoyed the blessed and individual society of three persons in the Godhead only for ever. But that out of his eternal and infinite goodness of love, purposing Christ to become a creature, and communicate with his creatures, ordained in his eternal counsel, that Person, in the Godhead, should be united to our nature, and

to one particular of his creatures, that so in the person of the Mediator, the true Ladler of Salvation might be fixed, whereby God might descend to his creatures, and his creatures ascend unto him." I quote this from the second volume of Dr. Goodwin's works—to which he, the Doctor, adds—"The state I would put this assertion into is—That indeed according to the Scriptures and the very foundation of our religion, God needed not any mere creature to help him, to create, but it is his own immediate power that doth it, as the book of Job, and that of Genesis tells us: therefore to obviate any objection, which it may be, will stumble some, that God would not have been pleased with any, or all works his power could make, unless this personal union of some creature with God had been added, and undertaken." Let it therefore be observed, our Christ is truly and by nature very God, of the substance with his Father, begotten by him, and equal to him; and that before the world was, as at the creation, he existed as God, with God his Father, before the creation, before any creature was, or any assumed by him."

So that Christ, considered as God-man, is the mediator of union; as so considered, his subserviency to God in the creation is set forth thus:—"God created all things by Jesus Christ—and for him."

Here surely we may cry out, "O the depth! of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

The cause of God's decrees, is the certain knowledge of the things decreed. His holiness—goodness and justice, appear in them all. Nothing out of God is the thing decreed. God's purpose and decrees are all immanent acts, "which he hath purposed in himself."

Let us now view the sovereignty of God as manifested in the acts of election, and reprobation, which took place before the foundation of the world, and which nothing in the creature was the cause of—God's act of choosing his people in Christ was before the foundation of the world, without the consideration of the fall; and it was not upon the foresight and footing of works, but was wholly and altogether of grace, and entirely to the praise and glory of it. And, in nothing more does Jehovah's sovereignty shine forth. Indeed, the highest instance of it was, in predestinating the second person in the Trinity to be God-man. And that this came under the decree of God, appears from the words of the Apostle Peter—"Who verily (says he, speaking of Christ) was foreordained before the foundation of the world." There are two befores annexed to this predestination: foreordained, and before the foundation of the world. "Christ was first ordained for those higher ends (says Dr. Goodwin) than our salvation is. First, for God himself to delight in, more than in all creatures he could make, Immanuel being the man, Jehovah's fellow:—his elect, 'in whom,' says Jehovah the Father, 'my soul delighteth'."

And Christ, as God-man, saith, "I was daily his

delight :” “and my delights were with the sons of men.”

Secondly, to behold the image of himself, and of all his attributes in a creature, that life and brightness shining therein, as could never have appeared in all mere creatures; but did in him, “who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.” Which words are spoken of the person of Christ, as God-man, as the next words in their coherence shew.

Thirdly, by this union of the Man Christ Jesus with the Son of God, the whole fulness of the Godhead was to dwell personally in him, he being “the image of the invisible God.”—Here is grace, in its utmost glory and highest sovereignty! and out of the same grace all the elect were chosen, and at the same time, in this great Head. God decreeing to make two worlds, and two sorts of intelligent beings to inhabit them, this sovereignty is exercised over, and towards them. Angels as well as men, had an election of grace, which broke forth towards them. The angels which stood, when the rest fell, are expressly styled, *Elect Angels*: and Jesus Christ is said to be their Head; and it was this which kept them from falling, and which raised them up to enjoy super-creation blessings. Election took place with respect to the human race also. It proceeded from immutable, everlasting love, and was fixed upon the persons of the elect in Christ, in whom they were chosen and predestinated to enjoy and partake of privileges—blessings and glory—

far above their due as creatures. Shall I here observe, that all this being pure grace, far above the due of creatures, that which we call rejection, preterition, or reprobation, hath not that harshness in it, which we commonly conceive. For this act which took place in the mind of God, was nothing more than leaving the rest, both angels and men, in that state in which they were placed by creation. They were created holy and righteous equal with the rest, and being left to the mutability of their own wills, they fell from that state of happiness, holiness and purity, in which they were by creation. In consequence of which, they have the wages of sin, the righteous curse of God's holy law, inflicted on them.

Here I would observe, that God created all the angels alike, pure and holy : they were at, and by creation, alike glorious. The fall of a part of them, who became rebels, was not owing to any decree of God respecting them, but to themselves. "They left, they kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation;" and in consequence of it God hath reserved them "in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

Electing grace was then most surely and sweetly discovered, as it respected those angels which stood; and it is more than probable, it then broke forth and appeared, just as it did towards us of the human race.

This secret, which was hid in God, never was discovered till after the fall. The nature, state, and case of mankind at, and by creation, was perfectly

pure, holy, righteous, and happy. It is the property of the creature to be mutable: God only is immutable. "I am the Lord, I change not." Though God can do all things, he cannot do this, make an immutable creature. This being the very state and condition of the creature, even by creation, that it was mutable and liable to change, it was possible for the creature to fall, and that this was the case the event has proved. It is said in the book of Job—"Behold, he putteth no trust in his Saints;" "yea, the heavens," (*i. e.* the inhabitants of heaven, the angels of his presence) "are not pure in his sight." It is also said, "his angels he charged with folly," which respects the mutability of their wills: for, though the elect angels are impeccable, yet this is above their due as creatures. It is owing to the grace of election which secured them from falling, and to that sight they have of *God manifested in the flesh*—without which they were in themselves as liable to fall as the rest, who actually did.

It may not be amiss to observe, that though the angels were created in heaven, yet sure we are, they had not that perfect sight of God by vision, which the elect angels now have. If they had they could not have sinned. The way of seeing God face to face, is brought up by Christ. It is in the person of the Son of God dwelling in the human nature, that elect angels, behold God's face, and live for ever. May we not then cry out most justly—O the depth of the riches of God's eternal decrees—counsel—and purposes towards his intelligent creatures! His will decrees, his power creates, the heavens with all their

hosts, and angels in heaven:—the earth with all things therein:—and man's body out of the dust— which he inspired with an intellectual soul; and having brought the angels into being, those bright and morning stars, who shone forth on the first day of the creation—in all the beauties of creature-grace, and inherent holiness:—as He also did man.—In this he shews his sovereignty—leaving some of the angels to the mutability of their own free will—who immediately fell from their obedience to his holy law—and became devils. He leaves man also, shining in all the beauties and excellencies of creature-grace, and inherent holiness—purity—rectitude and righteousness—who prefers his own will to God's—and thus sin entered amongst the creatures, and in this way it entered into the world, and death by sin, and thus in Adam, all have sinned. The Scriptures declare it, and every man, both saint and sinner, gives living proofs, and confirming evidences of it. We are not now in the same state in which we were by creation, but are fallen from it. We are fallen from God the fountain of happiness; yea, fallen as low as it is possible for us to be, out of hell. Here I may break forth with wonder and admiration, at God's dealings towards fallen angels and fallen man. “He spared not the angels that sinned but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” The justice of God was exercised immediately upon them, and they are now, and will for ever remain under the curse and wrath of God. But, O the depth of the riches of God's love—mercy—and grace,

toward mankind sinners! Though our fall was equal with that of the apostate angels, who sinned with an head, as we sinned in an head, as it respects the guilt and power of it—yet Jehovah takes the advantage of it to open the good treasury of his grace, proclaiming to sinful Adam, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” In which was revealed boundless grace, and mercy, springing from everlasting love, towards elect sinners. “O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.” Here let us stop a moment, and behold the goodness and severity of God! On the fallen angels severity.

Sin in, and committed by them, is punished with the execution of God’s wrath towards and upon them. When we read in Scripture concerning this, we do not complain of any injustice in God, though he thus acted towards them. We see their damnation to be owing to themselves, the fruit and wages due to them for sin; but, when we read of the damnation of any of the human race, whom God leaves to perish in their sins, how does the heart rise against it, and against God for it! and how ready are we to charge him with injustice! Alas! fallen man! there is no cause for complaint.

None are damned but for sin. If some were not eternally damned on account of it, how would the justice of God appear? This perfection of the divine nature is as dear to Jehovah as his mercy.

And God will glorify these two tremendous attributes in every individual of Adam’s posterity.



He will either glorify his mercy through the atoning blood of Christ, in the pardon of sin, or, his justice in inflicting everlasting punishment upon sinners for it.

I proceed to take notice that God having created man, holy and righteous, and having given him a law which was holy, just, and good—constituting Adam the federal head of all his posterity, and giving him sufficient will, power, and creature-grace to keep it perfectly; he falling from his obedience, it entailed a curse upon himself, together with all his descendants, who depended upon him, and were to stand or fall with him. The covenant of works he broke, and the sentence of condemnation passed upon him, and all his seed.

How any could escape it—be reconciled to God—and brought into fellowship with him, Adam knew not, nor Satan neither. Adam had done what in him lay to damn himself, and all his offspring. The devil thought all was over, and that they would be equally as miserable as himself. But, O the depths of sovereign grace! when the enemy had thus come in against all mankind like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifted up a standard against him. The first dawn of grace, the first appearance of everlasting love, in the first declaration of mercy, was given forth threatening-wise to Satan, and an universal victory over him, his power and dominion, was then proclaimed.

But who can be found in earth or heaven, who is able to vanquish sin—conquer Satan—obey the holy law—satisfy the demands of justice—make reconciliation and obtain eternal redemption? Sin

defied all the armies of the living God. It resists to die by any created arm, and has proved itself too strong for inherent holiness, both in *Angels* and *Man* ! Behold ! election-grace breaks forth, and in every way sufficient for the salvation of all the vessels of mercy. Now the grand secret begins to be opened—the Three in Jehovah, fixed the plan of redemption—settled it in counsel—confirmed it by covenant—ratified it by their joint oath—that through the incarnation of the second person, and by obedience and sacrifice, life everlasting shall be the fruit thereof, to all the elect and beloved ones. The everlasting love of God, which had been in his heart from eternity, and which would last throughout eternity—was now to have vent, and be openly discovered and manifested. Out of it, as the infinite fountain, every spiritual blessing comes, and it shall be displayed to the very uttermost. O the depth of the love which is in God ! how great it is, can never be conceived, or expressed ; no, not in heaven. Jehovah the Father so loved an elect world, that he gave his only-begotten Son ! “ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins ! ”

Here then is a glorious mine of free grace opened to our view. An everlasting love in the heart of the everlasting God, sufficient to be the bond of union between him, and his people, and strong enough to last throughout eternity : which takes occasion to triumph over their sin and misery—which guides mercy—and causes it to run through the channel of

Christ's blood into the very heart of his elect. Sirs, here is also a depth of wisdom discovered ! To the end the elect may be saved in a way consistent with all the perfections of Deity—the moral law must be obeyed—the penalties of it sustained—the debt of satisfaction answered. Here it required the manifold wisdom of God to be exercised. “O the depth of the riches ! both of the wisdom, and knowledge of God !” Infinite wisdom ! the hidden wisdom of Jehovah was herein discovered ! To find out a proper person to be the Redeemer of the chosen ones. Jehovah the Father glories in it, saying, “I have found a ransom—I have laid help upon one that is mighty.” Him who was fit to be a Mediator between God and man, must be both God and man. The Son of God, is God by nature, and he undertook to become man, *Immanuel*, God with us. What a depth of wisdom was discovered in the constitution of Him in his office of mediation ! in laying the sins of the elect upon Him—in his bearing the curse—and making his ~~soul~~ an offering for sin ! What a depth is also discovered of God's mercy ! God's people by the fall became the subjects of sin and misery. They are vessels of mercy, who are said to be afore prepared to glory, being predestinated thereunto in God's purpose and decree, entitled thereunto by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and they are in the Lord's time, actually made meet for it by the regenerating grace and energy of the Holy Spirit. God intrusted Jesus Christ alone with all the vessels of mercy. Put

them all into his hands. Treasured up in him all the mercy he would bestow upon them, either in time, or eternity. Jehovah would never have permitted the fall, but to answer and accomplish some great and glorious purposes. Though we cannot assign the reason why God permitted moral evil to enter into the world, yet this we may venture to affirm, that he glorifies his grace, love and mercy, to the uttermost, in the salvation of his people from all the miseries of it. Did grace prevent the elect angels from falling into sin! and guide and preserve their wills, immutably to choose God as their supreme good, and his glory as their ultimate end? And are they preserved, and will they be continued unblameable in holiness, being favoured with a sight of God dwelling personally in the manhood of Christ? Yes. And it is that which will for ever secure them from a possibility of falling;—and which follows upon their having Christ, God-man, for their head. The grace of God is, as illustriously, if not more gloriously displayed ~~towards~~ towards the elect sinners of the human race. Though grace did not keep them from falling, yet it raises them up from the ruins of the fall, and lifts them above all the evils of it, and it will one day exalt them to eternal glory and blessedness. Exactly suitable to which Dr. Watts sings—

“ He rais’d me from the depths of sin,  
The gates of gaping hell :  
And fix’d my standing more secure  
Than ’twas before I fell.”

To be brought out of a sinful state—to be saved from eternal death, by the dying of the Lord Jesus—for *enemies to be reconciled to God by the death*

*of his Son!* is grace, far beyond what we can estimate the worth, or comprehend the greatness of! It seems to me to be one of the greatest expressions in Scripture concerning it, Ephes. i. 3, 4, 5; where the Apostle having spoken of eternal election in Christ—of being blessed in Him with all spiritual blessings—being predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will—adds—“To the praise of the glory of his grace.”

God's grace is his highest glory. And he glorifies himself in the discoveries of it to the uttermost.

Election springs from grace. Jesus Christ himself, considered as Mediator, is not the cause of it. It is not founded, nor does it depend upon his mediation, obedience, and death. It is not an act of mercy, but of love. The acts of election, and rejection took place when all the human race were considered in the mass of pure creatureship. God chose his people out of his own love. It was the fruit of it. “Yea, (says Moses) he loved the people.” His love to them was in Christ his Son. He chose them in Him, and loved them in him, with an everlasting love. His love is towards them the same at all times, in all states, and conditions, into which they are brought. Being, therefore, by the fall brought into a state of sin, God's love shines forth and is expressed by giving Christ to become a covenant to the people. Here let us stand amazed at God's supreme sovereign grace, love, and the good pleasure of his will towards his chosen ones!

O the depth of sovereign grace in the riches of

it! — How incomprehensible the love! how sovereign the mercy! Some, who are by nature as sinful as the devil, and have been in practice as vile as any of the damned; how has free grace triumphed over their sins, miseries, and hell-deservings! — Plucked them as brands from endless burnings, and saved them from endless wrath! “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.”

When we behold by faith, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh—transferring the sins of his people, and laying them upon Him, making Him a curse for them, we may well cry out, “O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” The word *judgments* in this place, signifies *mercies*. You have the same word made use of in this sense, in the 36th Psalm, “Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains, thy judgments are a ~~great~~ deep: O Lord, thou preserveth man and beast. How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.” The providential mercies which God exerciseth towards man and beast, are a great deep. They are unsearchable and past finding out. But, O how excellent! how far excelling is his loving-kindness! — his covenant-mercy to his beloved ones!

I would here present to your view, some of those unsearchable mercies, and ways of God which are past finding out, which we can only admire and

adore. Take but a view of God's dealings with sinners in a time-state. Some are called. Others are given up to their own heart's lust. Some are saved from the love, guilt, and power of sin; others remain under them, live in them, and die in them, and are eternally damned for them. Some live, what we call a moral life, yet remain ignorant of Christ Jesus: whilst others, who have lived in all kinds of immorality, are savingly visited with mercy. Take but a view of what the Lord hath done in the present age: yea, in some of you, and before your eyes. Have you not seen some hardened wretches who were grossly ignorant of God, and the Lord Jesus, called by grace? brought to the knowledge of the Son of God, and who have been made new creatures? Have not some of you experienced the Almighty energy of the Holy Ghost, quickening your dead souls, raising up your hearts to God — forming Christ in you as the hope of glory? Whilst others, who it may be, were moral before you were spiritual; who attend the same means, hear the same word — sit under the administration of the same ordinances — yet are not visited by the Lord, nor made acquainted with their state and case! We may well cry out, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." When God is pleased to manifest his mercy to the hearts of sinners, the unwilling are made willing in the day of his power. And he shews, at times, his rich mercy, and displays his divine sovereignty in saving such persons whose sins are so vile, whose lives have been so bad, so hardened and so profligate,

that we had not the least hope, of one would not venture a sixpence upon their salvation. Sure I am, had we seen the thief upon the Cross, while he remained hardened and impenitent, we should have had less expectation of his salvation. And yet—be astonished, O ye heavens at it! and admire, O ye sons of men, the sovereignty of grace! Christ looks upon this monstrous rebel, and saves him by his mercy from endless misery! yea, he introduces him into eternal glory. There is a remarkable discovery of God's sovereignty displayed in his calling his people. Generally speaking, it is their condition, that they are, in the worst case they ever were in the whole course of their lives, when God is pleased to visit them with his mercy. They are often more stout-hearted against God—more obstinately set upon sin; yea, more deliberately set upon their own damnation than ever before. Something remarkable often attends them just at that time, when effectual calling breaks forth towards them, and takes place in them. I might here refer you to the case before mentioned, that of the thief, who reviled Christ when he was hanging on the Cross:—and also to the case of *Saul* the persecutor, who was “breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord.” A spirit and frame, in which you, and I, should never have expected him to be visited with mercy.

I might also mention the case of that remarkable convert of our own age and country, Colonel Gardiner, who was waiting with impatience for the clock to strike, that he might pursue his devilish



lusts. When lo! Christ converts him before he heard the clock.

But I will recite the following instance of sovereign grace, given by Elisha Coles, in his incomparable book on election. "I knew a man (says he) who when he came under conviction, endeavoured to stifle them all that lay in his power, and hardened himself against them; he saw their tendency, and was so opposite to it, that he resolved in express terms (he would not be a Puritan) a name given to the people of God in that day: whatever came of it. To the Church he must go, his master would have it so; but this was his way, to loll over the seat, with his fingers in both his ears: here, had grace been general, or conditional, it would surely have been non-plussed. But, a chosen vessel must not be lost: now steps in electing grace, and by a casual slip of his fingers, or elbows, drew out the stoppers, and sent in a word from the pulpit, which like fire from heaven, melted his heart, and cast it into a new mould. Surely in this, the Lord did not wait for the man's compliance or improvements; his work was not originated from thence, nor depended thereon." All is of God. Regeneration is owing to his abundant mercy.

He pardons some of the greatest sins. Saves some of the greatest sinners, and all to the praise of the glory of his grace. He preserves his called ones. Leads them safely on through all the storms of life, in spite of sin, Satan, death, and hell, and he will bring them all to glory.

And when you, and I, who are the objects of

God's love, the subjects of his grace, the monuments of his mercy, are placed in the kingdom of glory, we shall throughout eternity, admire the riches of sovereign grace.

You will there ascribe your election in Christ, your redemption by Christ, your regeneration, sanctification, and eternal glorification, and happiness to the free grace of God alone. This will be your song —“Not unto us, but to thy name be all the glory.” You will find yourselves everlastingly indebted, and will know then what free grace is.

Oh! that you, and I, may humbly adore God for his grace bestowed upon us, by considering that we were by sin, as vile as the damned, and as sinful as hell. There are some in the infernal pit, whose sins were not so vile in some acts, as ours have been. We have found, praised be God for it, that, “He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, but whom he will he hardeneth.”

I conclude thus, “O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom, and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him? and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. *Amen.*”

## SERMON XIX.

SCRIPTURAL MORTIFICATION OF SIN IN THE  
BELIEVER, THE FRUIT OF CHRIST'S DEATH.

ROMANS VI. 11.

*Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

**SIN** is the greatest of all evils. And if a man was possessed of all the wisdom that was in Solomon, and was as sagacious as the angels of God in heaven, he could not fully conceive, or express the evil which is in it, as it is a transgression committed against God !

It hath introduced and brought with it all the evils which are in the world, There is no misery which we feel, either in mind, body, or estate, but it originates from, and is entirely owing to sin, as the sole and proper cause thereof. There is no misery which the damned in hell feel, but it is the fruit and effect of it. And there is no remedy for sinners, no cure, or deliverance from the guilt, power, and dominion of sin ; for the pardon or subdual of it, in any

human means. Sin is a transgression of God's most holy law: and as an offence against an infinite God, there is an infinite evil contained in it. The law of God being broken and dishonoured by it, and it being an act of high treason and rebellion against the eternal Majesty of Jehovah, divine justice requires satisfaction from the sinner himself, or from some person for him, who is capable of maintaining and magnifying the divine law, both in its precepts and penalties. The sinner himself cannot do this. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." And the holy and righteous law of God, hath passed sentence upon all flesh, and declares, that all the world is become (and consequently every individual in it) *guilty before God*. And it is fixed and settled by the unalterable will of the Most High, that, by the deeds of the law, *no flesh living shall be justified*. For, "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them."

In the former chapter, the Apostle informs us how sin came into the world: by one man (*viz.* Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that, or, in whom, all have sinned. Adam was the federal head, representative or root, of all mankind, who, being in his loins when he fell, they all fell in, and with him. What he did as their head affected them. In consequence of his breaking God's law, they are all transgressors, and they receive and derive from him, a sinful, polluted, and an unholy nature. This the Apostle illustrates by speaking of *Adam* and

Christ, as the two great heads of their respective seeds. That, as the first *Adam*, through his fall, conveys sin, corruption and death, to all his posterity; so Christ conveys life, righteousness, and grace to all his. And yet in this there is a dissimilitude. As for instance, sin and death, through the first man, are conveyed in a natural way to his offspring; but life and righteousness from Christ, in a way of grace. It was but one offence of Adam's which brought condemnation and death upon all his posterity; but the righteousness of Christ, not only justifies his seed from that one offence, but from all others.—The one is unto death, eternal death; the other is unto spiritual and eternal life; and greater is the efficacy of the one to quicken, than of the other to kill. Grace abounds; yea, it super-abounds, over and beyond all the aboundings of sin in the elect. It bears down all before it; it conquers all opposition; removes all obstacles, and “reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Because the Apostle speaks so freely concerning the riches of free and sovereign grace, fearing lest licentious persons should mistake, or misinterpret his words and meaning; he begins this chapter before us with this question, “What shall we say then?” Seeing the grace of God super-abounds over and beyond the aboundings of sin! “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” To which, with the utmost detestation and abhorrence of any such consequence being deducible from his doctrine, he replies, “God forbid!” And asks another ques-

tion? "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Believers, real believers in Christ, are dead to sin; and therefore it is impossible for them to live to that, and in that, to which they are dead. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" The Apostle proceeds, in a very beautiful manner, to shew that believers are under the strongest motives and obligations, to live to the honour, and persevere in the service of their blessed Redeemer. They, having heard, and received his Gospel, and having embraced him by faith as their everlasting life, righteousness, and hope, had been baptized into Jesus Christ, into the profession of him; and had hereby publicly testified their faith in him, union to, and communion with him. It being the only way then to baptize persons upon a profession of their faith. And they were baptized into his death: upon their profession of their being interested in the efficacy of it, and of their actually enjoying by faith the benefits of his death, such as pardon, peace, righteousness, and spiritual life. Such persons are dead to sin by the death of Christ; and are alive unto God by the resurrection of Christ. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." "For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

By means of our being truly implanted into Christ, and partaking the virtue and efficacy of his death, we shall also be found like those who are

#### 424. *Mortification of Sin in the Believer*

risen with him by the faith of the operation of God; and our lives will be a proof and manifestation, that we have known, and experienced the power and efficacy of Christ's resurrection in our own souls.

And here I would observe, that the subject the Apostle is treating of in this chapter, is the doctrine of *sanctification*, and that in both its parts, as it consists in mortification, and *vivification*; and also in its grand *original cause*, and in its blessed *fruits and effects*.

And, this being the subject, let us endeavour to keep it in our eye, for it is of great importance to the real Christian. There is not a real Saint upon earth, but is longing to have sin perfectly subdued; to feel corruption powerfully mortified, and to experience the life of Christ more and more, daily in his own soul. From the consideration of this being the subject, I shall endeavour to be more particular in opening and explaining the foregoing verses, which will lead and bring us to our text.

Paul, as he is here particularly discoursing on the great doctrine of mortification of sin, so he leads us to the fountain of all real, true and spiritual mortification. He shews us that it is solely the fruit and effect of Christ's death for us, and of Christ's death in us, by the power of the Holy Ghost; whereby, living in, and enjoying fellowship with him in his death, we have the virtue and efficacy thereof made known in our hearts, and feel it in our lives. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Here he calls the corruption of our hearts, "the old man,"

because it is as old as the man, and it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man. It lives and dwells in all and every man. It rules and governs all unregenerate persons, and consists of various parts and members, and hence it is called *a body of sin*. This “old man,” or corrupt nature, is crucified with Christ, says Paul; *i. e.* with Christ, when he was. For, the blessed Immanuel, as the surety of his people, substituted his person in the law-place, room, and stead of the elect. He represented their persons; was charged by divine justice with their sins, and he bore all their original and actual transgressions, “in his own body on the tree.” And, by his sufferings and death, he hath perfectly abolished and destroyed the damning guilt and power of it. “Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed.” This is crucified with Christ, and nailed to his cross. And, as by the sacrifice of Christ, sin is put away out of the sight of law and justice; so, by the virtue of Christ’s death, the dominion of sin, as it respects his members, is likewise broken and subdued in their souls. And, hence it is, they “do not serve sin: for he that is dead is free from sin.” That is, such as are one with Christ, and interested in his death, they are thereby, as his members, dead to sin in him, and by his death, are freed, or “justified,” (so it is in the margin) “from sin.” “Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him”—a life of justification—a life of sanctification; and a life of glorification. “Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no



more, death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once ;” he died for sinners, in their room and stead—he died for sin. It was imputed to him, and laid upon him, and he died for sin *once*. His death was effectual to atone, remove, abolish, and destroy, the damning guilt and power of sin, and therefore it never needs to be repeated. “ But in that he liveth,” as their head and representative, righteousness and atonement, he liveth to die no more, and liveth as the justifying Head of his people, “ He liveth unto God.” He liveth in his presence, and as Mediator, he liveth by the power of God, and unto the glory of God ; enjoying him as his portion and inheritance. This brings us to our text. “ Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Our business at this time will be to explain the text before us, in which are the following things :

First, the Apostle’s direction, in which are two things. He would have them first, to consider themselves to be dead indeed unto sin ; and, secondly, to reckon themselves to be alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

First, He would have them to reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin.

There is nothing more desirable, to real believers, than thus to do, if it might be done on good and solid grounds. For sin is to them their greatest affliction and distress. And, though they have had a sense of pardoning mercy, through faith in the blood of Jesus ; yet, as it hath existence in them,

they find it working and wants to govern them. And, though the power and dominion of it is broken in their souls, by the almighty arm of Jesus; yet, as they find it hath its inbeing in them, it is their plague and burden, and it often causes them to groan, being heavily burdened with it. The great lessons which the believer wants to be daily learning in the school of Christ, are, how his conscience may be kept happy in the love of God—and how he may maintain fellowship with Jesus Christ, in his walk, and in his warfare.

The Spirit of the Lord points out the fountain of Christ's blood, as having everlasting virtue and efficacy to cleanse from all sin before the Lord, and that by receiving the testimony of God, concerning this, this will purge the conscience from guilt and condemnation. For, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." This is the testimony of God, which is always one and the same, and this believed will always be found to be a preservative from guilt, and a blessed means for the enjoyment of the peace of God in the conscience; which produces the love of God in the heart. For, the believer, looking upon God as freely pardoning, justifying, accepting, and loving him in the beloved, this begets, and increases the love of God in the heart. And, the believer, having his conscience sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and his heart made perfectly happy in the love of God, he sets out to walk with the Lord, and he walks by faith. The rule, for him to walk by, is the word of God.—His leader and guide, is the Spi-

rit.—His end is God's glory. And the whole is the effect of his union to, and communion with the blessed Jesus.

In Christ he lives ; by him he is strengthened, and as he partakes of, and has fellowship with him, his conversation will be ordered aright ; the more spiritual he will become, and the more successful he will be in *fighting the good fight of faith, till he lays hold on eternal life*. My principal design at this time, is to speak, particularly, concerning the Gospel method of the mortification of sin. This real believers want to be acquainted with, to the end that they may get victory over their corruptions, and go on the way to heaven with increasing joy. And this, being a doctrine of great importance, and which hath to do with real experience, I shall endeavour by the Lord's assistance, to be the more careful and particular in it. Perhaps, there is no Gospel truth which hath so much influence in our sanctification and growth in grace, which the people of God so little understand and attend to.

For, though in the prayers of real Saints, abundance of petitions are offered up, for strength against, and victory over sin ; yet, we find by consulting our own hearts, that we are very seldom led to consider, that all our real and spiritual mortification of corrupt lusts and affections, must flow from our having actual fellowship with the Lord Jesus in his death, in the virtue and efficacy of it.

It may not, therefore, be amiss to observe, what

we take for, and generally apprehend to be mortification of sin. It is very natural for us to conceive, that it consists in our dying to particular acts of sin. In overcoming some particular corruption ; or, in a cessation of sin ; or, not feeling it. These, as I apprehend, are generally conceived by us, to be what mortification of sin consists in. Now, that it doth not consist in these ; that it is a more spiritual thing, and in what it doth consist, will be my principal business to make known and declare unto you. And first, that it doth not consist only in dying to particular acts of sin ; or, that this is not mortification of sin, will I think appear from hence ; because, though we may cease, or, be dead to some particular acts of sin, yet the fountain, the whole body of sin, still remains within. And the ceasing omitting, watching over, or, dying to particular acts of sin, will never amount to spiritual mortification. It being no more, than what persons, who are wholly in a state of nature may do, and many of them actually do. Yea, even many *Papists* go thus far, and, by legal restraints, watchings, vows, and fastings, keep their particular corruptions in awe, just as you would do a mastiff by chaining him, so that he is restrained, though his nature or disposition is not at all changed.

Secondly, that it doth not consist in a cessation of sin is clear. For there may be, and is a casting off many sinful lusts and practices, where persons are wholly unacquainted with the power of divine grace upon the heart. Many sins will not suit the constitutions, and many are cast off and neglected

because they suit us not. And, if a total cessation to sin was that wherein true and spiritual mortification of sin consisted, then dead persons would be truly mortified. For they cannot sin in their bodies, so long as they remain under the power of death and the grave. So,

Thirdly, neither doth it consist in not feeling sin. For none felt more of it than the Apostle Paul, as appears by his own account, and by his bitter complaint.—“O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death !” And yet he was a man sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, and was by faith, a partaker of true, real, and spiritual mortification ; and in consequence of it, was dying to sin daily, and living unto righteousness.

It is a higher mystery to be mortified to sin, than not to sin, or, not to feel sin. For to feel sin, and to mourn on this account, is the fruit and effect of spiritual life ; and the Lord the Spirit gives his people to feel it, that the power of Christ may be put forth in them to restrain, subdue, and conquer it for them.

If mortification of sin consisted in not feeling it, how could real Saints be comforted, seeing they, and they only feel the burden of it, and are afflicted with it ? For those who are in a natural state, dead in trespasses and sins, feel it not, neither in its guilt nor power ; are not uneasy on account of it, nor seeking deliverance from it.

I go on therefore to set forth and declare what mortification of sin is, and wherein it consists ; and

shall endeavour, by the Lord's assistance and blessing, to pursue ~~this~~ subject in the following manner : First, by observing that the fountain of corruption is alike in the fallen nature of all <sup>S</sup>aints. And secondly, shew in what their sanctification and mortification consists. And first, as it respects the fountain of corruption, that it is alike in the fallen nature of all Saints. This appears from the total corruption of it by the fall. As our whole nature, and every power and faculty of it, both as it respects body and soul were then and thereby defiled ; so the whole, of the corruption and defilement, is conveyed to every one of us, therefore one is not more deeply fallen than another : nor more foully stained, as it respects natural corruption. And, that this corruption remains in Saints, who are really such, is evident from Paul's confession concerning himself, " I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing : " meaning, in his fallen nature. Now the fountain, from whence sin springs and flows, is the heart.

There is not a faculty of the soul, or a member of the body, but what is defiled with it : nay, every motion of the body is sinful ; and mortification of sin, and sanctification, which I am secondly to treat of, do not consist in the taking away the sinful nature ; or, in a destroying the fountain of corruption ; but it consists in our union with Christ our Head and Righteousness, and in our having spiritual communion and fellowship with him in his death, and resurrection. And, here I must, in order to lead on your minds and direct your thoughts into this subject, observe to you, and lay before you, the

union there is between Christ and his people. This will lead to the second thing to treat of, viz. the fellowship that there is between Christ and them. As it respects the union between Christ and his people, the Scriptures treat abundantly of it.

Christ is called the *Head of his body*; and the Church is styled *his body*. And this union is real, inseparable, and eternal. Hence it is there can be no separation from the love of God, because God loves his people in Christ, and their persons being chosen in him, and united to him, the Father loves them as he doth him. "Thou hast loved them (says Christ) as thou hast loved me;" John xvii. 23. Now this union, between Christ and his people, was before the foundation of the world, for so early were they chosen in him, and by the eternal choice of the Father and his act of election, they were from eternity united to the person of our Lord Jesus.

He was their Head, and they had a representative being and existence in Him; and he, being their Head from eternity, and considering them as his members, his body, his sheep, his bride; upon this very consideration he undertook their cause; stood up, on their behalf, and engaged as their Surety and Redeemer in the everlasting covenant. For their sakes he sanctified himself; separated and set himself apart for the great work of salvation, which was by his Father's designation and appointment, and his own voluntary susception of the office of Mediator.

And, in the fulness of time, he came down from heaven by the assumption of our nature. His birth was holy and spiritual. And, though we were not

regenerated and born again in him ; yet this must be allowed, that his birth laid, and is the foundation of the spiritual birth, which all his people are, and will be made partakers of.

And his holy birth takes away our original sin. For by his birth, life, and death, he “ finished the transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.”

What our Lord Jesus Christ undertook with his Father to be, and to do, and what he finished in his state of humiliation, was undertaken and performed on the behalf and for the sake of his beloved ones. He represented them in his covenant-engagements, and was manifested in the flesh, as Jehovah their Righteousness. He suffered and bore their sins, and guilt, and filth, and curse, and was made “ sin for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him.” He died, was buried, was raised again, and ascended into heaven, as their Representative. Hence the Apostle saith, “ And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” Ephes. ii. 6. Now, as Christ is the Head of his body, and has been manifested to take away their sins, and in him is no sin, so he is a living, and life-giving head unto them. As the natural head influences all the members, and imparts life, strength, and motion unto them ; so doth our Lord Jesus Christ. He imparts life, strength, and motion, to all his mystic members. He sends the Holy Ghost down from heaven into their hearts, to make known his love to them, to make them acquainted with their



union to him, and to discover what he hath done for them. And this is the means whereby their hearts are most divinely and powerfully, and with an omnipotent sweetness, which cannot be resisted, drawn to come unto him, to centre in him, to take him for their portion, and their ALL in ALL. This leads me to observe, that our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Head of his mystic body, is the fountain of all spiritual life unto them, and of all real sanctification in them.

The whole fulness of grace dwells in Christ, just as light doth in the sun. And all grace comes from Christ, and is received out of his fulness. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and he hath it for the supply of his members. He hath a fulness of life, light, peace, pardon, righteousness, grace, comfort, and holiness; and he communicates his fulness to his members; and this by the agency of his Holy Spirit.

He puts forth the power of his Spirit in the hearts of his people, and hereby he quickens up their souls to spiritual and everlasting life. And herein sanctification consists, in being made spiritually and truly alive to God, by the power of the Holy Ghost, through believing in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sanctification is the fruit of Christ's death, and is produced in us by Christ's dwelling in us by his Spirit. It doth not so much consist in those habits of grace wrought in the soul in regeneration, whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature, as it doth in spiritual quickenings, through the mighty power of the Holy Ghost.

For sanctification in its principle is nothing but life, spiritual life received from Christ, and acted and exercised upon and towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, as Christ is the head and fountain of sanctification to his people; so he imparts his Holy Spirit, and sheds him abroad abundantly upon them; who leads them, not to live upon the principle of sanctification wrought within, nor upon any of the actings of it by them, but upon the *fountain*.

And it is those sights and discoveries which the Holy Ghost gives them of Christ and of his grace and glory, that invincibly carry on their souls to love God above all, and to hate sin with a perfect hatred. Now, when believers are brought to know Jesus, and have actually received him into their hearts and affections, they are led by the Holy Spirit to seek after fellowship and communion with him. And this leads me to observe further the two particular effects of sanctification. The one is life:—the other is death:—which consist in being made alive to God, and dead to sin.

As I apprehend, sanctification is expressed in these words, “You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:” “quickeneth us together with Christ.” And sanctified persons are in a spiritual sense dead to sin, in and by which, their sanctification is discovered. But how are they thus? Are they delivered from the principle and existence of sin in them? They are not. All the corruption of nature still remains. But they are made partakers of a spiritual and divine birth—and they are **spiritually incorporated** into Christ—whereby they

have fellowship and communion with him, and through his dwelling in them, they so experience the power of his death and resurrection, as to die daily, by virtue of it, unto sin, and live daily unto God. So that here again I would observe and repeat it, that the means whereby sin is mortified in real believers, is by their union with Christ in his death, and through the power which he puts forth in their souls, as the consequence and fruit of his dying for them ; and which he makes known in them.—Therefore, as the believer hath, and carries about with him, a body of sin and death, which will be the case as long as his breath is in his body ; so he is to be seeking for constant fellowship with Christ in his death, which will be the means of his dying unto sin. Because, the more and clearer views he takes in by faith of Christ, and the more he beholds him as dying for sin, the more and greater hatred will be wrought in his heart against it, and he will hereby gain victory over it. Christ is the true antitype of the Brazen Serpent. And while the believer looks at him, he feels in his own soul the virtue and efficacy of the Cross of Christ—and having healing in the wounds of Jesus, he finds also that Christ imparts spiritual strength. Sanctification then, is not the changing, or renewing our corrupt natures ; but it consists in making the soul alive to God, and every act put forth in the soul upon the Lord, is the fruit and effect of Christ's dwelling there.

Sanctification is precisely, in my opinion, the fruit and effect of the Holy Spirit's dwelling in the soul, and the effects which accompany it, are, a living to

God, and a dying to sin. This leads me, to consider,

Secondly, the fellowship which Christ and believers have with each other, and which produceth the fruits of holiness. As the union between Christ and Saints is inexpressibly near, firm, and perfect; so the communion between them is inestimably precious, full, and free.

He communicates unto them all those spiritual supplies which they need, and they have communion with him in all the blessings and benefits of his salvation. His death hath delivered them from the guilt and condemnation of all their sins, and they may rejoice, saying, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died."

His righteousness makes them everlastingly righteous before the Lord: and in it they are justified from all things. "His blood cleanseth them from all sin." And, though they feel that in and of themselves they are guilty creatures, yet here is their comfort, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." They feel themselves empty and destitute of all good, in and of themselves, but they repair to Christ, in whom all fulness dwells, and they find him to be an overflowing fountain of grace and mercy. And believers having fellowship with Christ, his Spirit dwelling in their hearts, and it being his work to carry on and increase fellowship and communion between Christ and them, this deadens their affections to all things here below—

mortifies their earthly members and vile affections—raises up their souls and desires within the vail, and fixes their minds upon the things which are above.

From what hath been delivered, we learn that Christ and his people are one. That the Holy Ghost brings them to know Jesus and the power of his resurrection, and to enjoy fellowship with him. And the virtue of Christ's death being revealed in them, they die to sin, for the power of Christ is put forth in their souls to the crucifying their vile affections. And that spiritual, real, and actual mortification of sin, which is a principal branch of sanctification, does not consist in sin not being in us, nor in its being continually resisted by us, nor in our not feeling it; but, that the death of Christ is the death and eternal destruction of sin, and in his death is our perfect mortification of it, root and branch; and from that death by faith, we experience the mortification of it in ourselves. Believers are perfectly delivered from all guilt and condemnation by the death of Christ, which frees them from the damning guilt, and delivers them also from the reigning power of sin. "Knowing this, saith the Apostle, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." And again, "I am crucified with Christ." And this believing view of our absolute mortification in Christ, saith a great worthy, "is the true Gospel method of mortifying sin in our own persons."

This appears from the text, in which the Apostle puts believers upon this; "Likewise, reckon ye

also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." This is the first thing which comes under our consideration, as it lies before us in the words which remain to be explained. "Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." This Paul puts true believers upon, and this they ought to do. But how shall they? Why, they are to consider themselves as one with the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as represented by him, both in the Garden and on the Tree—as having been considered by God the Father as *in Him*, when he bore our sins, and sustained the curse due to us for them. And to view by faith the perfect atonement; to study the everlasting virtue and efficacy, value, and all-sufficiency, of Christ's death, to take away, remove, and abolish, perfectly and for ever, all the sins of his people out of the sight of law and justice: and herein to view our perfect and full discharge from all our personal guilt and condemnation.

This doctrine is not pleasing to flesh and blood. And, though it be full of sweet and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, who feel in themselves the Spirit of Christ, mortifying their earthly members, and drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things—yet, even such are likely, either to overlook it, or to refuse comfort from it, fearing and suspecting it would lead them to be careless, though it hath, when received by the grace of the Spirit of God, the quite opposite effect. I shall endeavour, therefore, to support this doctrine with such Scripture testimonies, as may serve to shew believers,

how safely they may receive it, and how confidently they may rely upon it.

I shall begin with a former quotation. “I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” “We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” “Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more.” “In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead,” “and ye are complete in him.” “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.” “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” “I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins.” “Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.” These scriptures testify that Christ and believers are one. That he hath finished salvation-work for them, and that in Him they are completely pardoned, righteous, and holy.—That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, accepts them, looks at, and views them in Christ the Beloved, as perfectly righteous in the robe of his obedience, and as perfectly cleansed in his atoning blood—that he views them in his Son, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.—They are before him unblameable and irreprovable—he pronounces them eternally forgiven, and everlastingly blessed.

When believers receive this, and give full credit unto it, they then set their own seal to the truth of God, and are disposed to take the Apostle’s advice,

to reckon themselves to be in the sight of, and before the Lord, what Christ their surety is. They view by faith their nature exalted and perfectly sanctified by the assumption of it into union with the Son of God. And they see that as they are one with Christ, they are in him dead to sin. That in him they are perfectly sanctified, perfectly delivered from the imputation of sin, freed from the condemning sentence of the law—freed from the stroke of divine justice—freed as perfectly as he is. The true and spiritual belief of this causes them to look upon themselves as pardoned, and being freely forgiven all trespasses, they are seeking for more fellowship with Christ herein. From hence the believer draws motives to fight against sin, and he hereby gains strength against it, and victory over it. For unless we are one with Christ, in his death, there can be no pardon of sin, and without a sense of pardoning-mercy, we can gain no victory over it. It is recorded concerning that noble army who are now before the throne, that, “they overcame by the blood of the Lamb.” When believers view by faith, sin perfectly conquered by the Almighty Jesus, they seek to have fellowship with him herein, and this is the means in which the Lord Christ puts forth his Almighty power to dethrone sin in their hearts : and pardoned sin cannot rule in them, or over them. The death of Christ, not only secures from eternal condemnation, but it likewise frees them from the dominion and reign of sin. It can no more finally conquer that person who is living by the faith of the Son of God, than it



can Christ himself. What a glorious sight it is for believers enlightened by the Spirit of God, to view themselves in Jesus, as represented by him before the throne complete, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing?

I proceed to the second thing in the text, which is, that believers, as directed, should reckon themselves “alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

That they have a right thus to do, appears, when we consider, that Christ, as the justifying Head of his people, is their everlasting life. His righteousness gives them a title to glory, and in it they shall “reign in life, by one Jesus Christ;” he being their everlasting life. “Your life, (saith the Apostle) is hid with Christ in God, and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” The Apostle would have them reckon their estate before God, to be what Christ’s is. Christ was their Head, their Life, and Advocate; and, what he their surety is, that they are in him—as truly alive to God by his resurrection, as he is. On them the second death can have no power. The life they have in him, and which they receive from him, death itself cannot touch. “I am the Resurrection and the Life.. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”

“Believest thou this?” saith *Christ* to *Martha*. Believers are said to be quickened *together with Christ*, Ephes. ii. 5; with the same life Christ is

quickened with, and this as the effect of his resurrection. The Holy Ghost implants in us a principle of life, and makes us new creatures. Here lies the comfort of the children of God, they are quickened together with him, and in him their Head and Representative.

Here lies our consolation, that our life is bound up in the bundle of life with Christ; and because "Christ liveth, we shall live also." Yea, we shall one day live in our measure and degree, the very life Christ liveth in heaven.

We shall as surely be introduced into heaven, as he hath been—we shall see him as he is, and then our joy will be full. We shall live in the immediate presence of God, and in the perfect enjoyment of the favour of God, and have the perfect and uninterrupted fruition of Godhead, in consequence of Jesus being unto us, "The Lord our Righteousness." We shall throughout eternity behold the God-man, Jehovah the Saviour, the everlasting Head of his people, our life and glory, and live for ever.

The people of God should reckon their state before God to be what Christ's is. In him they are eternally beloved, freely pardoned, perfectly justified, everlastingly accepted, and are in him entitled to all the grace and glory of God, revealed in the covenant, and secured in the promises.

Oh! that you, who are believers, may have your hearts warmed, your souls elevated, and your minds raised up to see, and view your persons

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and services accepted in the Beloved. May you consider yourselves to be, in Christ, perfectly dead to sin, and in Him, to be perfectly alive unto God. May you with full purpose of heart cleave unto him, and be living in fellowship with him, that by having communion with him in his death, you may truly die to sin, and by communion with him in his resurrection, you may truly live unto God.

Having delivered myself as well as I could on this subject, I close, intreating the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive what has been amiss, to bless what may make for his own glory, and to supply what is wanting by the divine teachings of his Holy Spirit: and all the praise and glory shall be ascribed to Him. *Amen.*

## SERMON XX.

OMNIPOTENT GRACE DISPLAYED, IN TRANSLATING SINNERS FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS, INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD'S DEAR SON.

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COLOSSIANS I. 13.

*Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.*

AS nothing more rejoiced the heart of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, Saint Paul, than seeing souls brought to Christ by the preaching of the everlasting Gospel; so, as a faithful minister, he took the same delight in instructing, edifying, and building up those, who, by the power of the Holy Ghost, were brought to believe on Jesus.

Hearing of souls being brought to lay hold of that great and blessed anchor of the soul, the Lord Jesus Christ, fired his heart with fresh zeal; and animated him with new courage to preach in season, and out of season, the unsearchable riches of Christ. The motives which Paul inculcated to

strengthen the faith of young or old converts, were the most noble, the most divine, and the most animating. He, like his adorable Master whom he served, directed believers to take a view of that immense ocean of everlasting love, which was in the heart of God the Father towards his people in Christ Jesus, from eternity. He greets his dear Disciples at Collosse, with those most comfortable words: "Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." His generous soul could wish them no greater blessing, than that the grace of the eternal Spirit might be communicated unto them, to sanctify their souls; to subdue their sins; to give and increase faith in them, that thereby they might enjoy peace, everlasting peace of conscience; peace with God the Father as their reconciled Father in Christ Jesus; and the comfortable presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, supporting them by his Almighty strength, till they should be admitted within the vail, to go no more out. Nor does the love of the Apostle stop here. No, for the grace bestowed upon them, he adds his thanks and prayer unto God for them. He prays, "that they might be filled with the knowledge of the Lord's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; and that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing: being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all-patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." And that they might never forget the great, the unbounded, the unspeakable mercy of God, mani-

fested towards them in conversion, he puts them in remembrance of that most dreadful state, from which God, out of the riches of his grace and mercy, had saved them ; he exhorts them to give thanks to the great Author of it. “ Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light ; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”— In discoursing on these words, it will be necessary to consider,

First, what this power of darkness is, which Paul here speaks of.

Secondly, Why it is called the power of darkness.

Thirdly, the utter impossibility of delivering ourselves from this state, by any, or all the powers we are possessed of. And,

Fourthly, what the kingdom of God’s dear Son is ; and who it is that translates us into that glorious kingdom.

First, we are to consider, what this power of darkness is, which Paul here speaks of.

The power of darkness, here spoken of, opens to our view, and represents to us, the dreadful apostacy of man from God. Man, by his own free will, and voluntary choice, rejected the command of his adorable Creator ; and by hearkening to the suggestions of the devil, became subject to that prince of darkness ; whereby there was no sin or iniquity, which that accursed Spirit should propose to man, but man would, not only be incapable of resisting,

but be by the devil compelled to commit it. When man fell from God he voluntarily became the devil's slave, and was subjected to that lawless tyrant. Sin, which has rendered the devils accursed, has also rendered man accursed. Who can describe, or what heart can conceive, the miseries of man's fall; when sin, with all its accursed concomitants, took place in his soul! When, from the image of God in which he was created, he sunk into the very image of Satan, possessing every infernal temper and inclination with his seducer. Our Apostle describes this miserable state of man in his 2nd chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians; where, speaking of what the Ephesians were before conversion, he says, that, "in time past, they walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, (that is the devil) "the Spirit that now," at this present time, "worketh in the children of disobedience."

So that, according to Paul, (who was possessed of the Spirit of God when he wrote thus) all mankind, whether moral or immoral, without exception; all those on whom converting-grace has not been bestowed, are under the dominion of the devil, and he works powerfully in them. If the case be thus, and how dare we dispute it, seeing the Holy Ghost by the mouth of Paul testifies it? how miserable are we, so long as we remain in a state of nature! Certainly, to be under the power of darkness; to be under the authority, dominion, and subjection of Satan, is a most awful, and desperate state and case.

And, that this is the real state and condition of all natural unrenewed men, we may see very plainly by the consequence. The Scriptures assure us that, “his servants ye are to whom ye obey.” Now no natural, unconverted man obeys God; but every natural man obeys the devil; therefore they are his servants. All those fruits of sin, and that immorality, which so much abounds in the hearts and lives of the unregenerate; that contempt of Christ and his Gospel, which is to be found among moral professors; these are all so many evidences, not only of man’s apostacy from God; but of his being at this very day, as much as ever, under the power of darkness. There is something very striking in this word, “The *power* of darkness:” as if the Apostle would intimate, that all the infernal power of darkness was exercised over poor sinners. Just as if he had said, that, sinners in a state of nature, are entirely under the power of the devil. And this will appear more fully, if we consider,

Secondly, why this state, which mankind are in by nature, is called, the power of darkness.

Now, it is called, the power of darkness, because of the effect it has upon us, so long as we are in that state. Darkness, is ever opposed to light; and is, most properly, used here, to set forth the spiritual darkness we are under through sin. Nothing is more clear from scripture and experience, than that, upon the first entrance of sin into our nature, the light of God’s Spirit was immediately withdrawn, and a darkness of understanding, and of every other



faculty, took place in the soul. The understanding, which, before the fall, was capable of knowing God, afterwards became, (by any moral agency,) incapable of attaining any saving knowledge of God, or his ways. And we find by woeful experience, that till the Most High, of his sovereign grace fulfils, that blessed promise, “Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way ;” let a man’s natural understanding be ever so great and extensively useful to his fellow-mortals, yet he is as blind and ignorant concerning that God, in whom he lives and moves, and has his being, as a stock or a stone. It being a most certain, nay an infallible conclusion that, “the natural man (though never so learned, and how vast soever his comprehension and genius may be) “receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,” “neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” He has lost all discernment of spiritual things, and can judge of nothing but by his depraved understanding. Hence it comes to pass, that though the truths of God may be declared unto him, ever so clearly and plainly, yet he cannot judge of them to any saving purpose. And, though he may be warned, ever so faithfully, to escape the wrath to come ; or invited ever so affectionately to come to Jesus Christ, for life and salvation ; yet, neither the misery that threateneth him, on the one hand, nor the sweetest invitations on the other, can prevail on him ; and all for this reason, “Because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.” This state, therefore, may truly be called,

“The power of darkness,” inasmuch as it extirpates all the light and knowledge of God from the soul; and casts such a thick veil of ignorance, and produces such contempt and hatred of God in the soul, that while the sinner remains in this condition, he prefers a state of enmity and hatred against God, though eternal damnation be his everlasting portion, to a state of life and liberty, to which sinners are invited by the Gospel. Must *he* not be under the power of darkness indeed, who can be happy without the light of God’s Spirit shining upon his soul; without the enjoyment of God’s love, and without the understanding of God’s most holy mind and will? And yet, what a vast multitude of men and women are there in this kingdom, who are so influenced by the power of darkness; who are so captivated by sin and the devil, as to neglect the great concerns of their souls, and of calling their own state in question, that they are concerned about nothing less than this! And though they be on the brink, the breaking brink of damnation, yet they are as careless and unconcerned, as if damnation were a light matter, and as if they were really in love with it!

Surely such persons may truly be said to be under the power of darkness. And this state will still appear more dreadful, if we consider,

Thirdly, the utter impossibility of delivering ourselves from it, by any, or all the powers we are possessed of. Here I cannot but observe Jehovah’s awful threatening to our first parents, when he said, “In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” Immediately upon the fall, man became dead to

God, spiritually considered. He, not only lost the image of God, in which he was created, which the Apostle tells us, consisted in righteousness and true holiness; but likewise all communion with his Maker, wherein consisted the life of his soul.

And, he hereby lost a will to all spiritual good, which, heretofore, willed nothing but what was consistent with the will and command of God. And all the powers and faculties of his body and soul, being through sin depraved and vitiated, he is, therefore, utterly incapable of regaining the image of God on his soul. Nor can he do any thing whereby his sin may be atoned for; or the least reconciliation made between his offended Maker and himself. For sin being an infinite evil, as committed against God, it is impossible for the least satisfaction to be made to God by offending man. Besides, the holy law which man has violated, sentences the sinner which has broken it, though but in the least respect, to the curse: which curse entirely cuts off the sinner from the least favour, and from acceptance with God, on the footing of works. For upon the least breach of it, it curses the sinner with just and holy curses for ever, and utterly excludes him from the least possibility of returning to his former state. This the Holy Scriptures abundantly testify. The Prophet David says, “The redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.” And Paul says, “The whole world (and consequently every individual in it) is become guilty before God:” and “by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified.” My friends, what say your hearts to these

things? Are you convinced that these things are so? Has the Spirit of the living God convinced you that you are fallen creatures? Has he convinced you, what a dreadful state you are in by nature, and that you deserve damnation? Were you ever brought to see the infinite holiness of God, as it shines forth in the law, and your utter inability of making the least satisfaction to God for your sins committed against him? Were you ever led by the Spirit of God to see what miserable, helpless, and hell-deserving creatures you are, and that every thought, word, and work, which proceeds from your natural hearts, are only sin, and that continually? If you have been taught this by the Holy Spirit, you then know that the state of fallen man is truly miserable, beyond description, and that every attribute of the Godhead is engaged to punish your sin. And that unless the Lord of all Lords out of his sovereign, rich grace, translates you into the kingdom of his dear Son, you must perish everlastingly.

And here we have reason to adore the unsearchable mercy of God, that he should be pleased in his infinite wisdom to find out a way to be gracious to sinners, and to bestow life and salvation upon his elect. This was the glorious contrivance of the Eternal Three, before all worlds; when foreseeing the fall, the co-equal and co-eternal Persons in the Godhead, engaged to save an innumerable company of poor sinners, as monuments of everlasting mercy; and to bring them to the participation of God's love in time, and to the perfect enjoyment of him in eternity.

The Father undertook in this covenant, to demand perfect obedience to his holy law, and to be a consuming fire to sin, and sinners, who should live and die without a perfect obedience to his will. And, that his eternal justice and truth might appear, and his vengeance against sin might be known, he chose his co-equal Son, who, with the Holy Spirit, was co-equal and co-eternal with the Father in the essence and unity of the self-existent Godhead, to be the surety of an innumerable company of sinners, which it was his good will and pleasure to save out of the ruins of the fall. This blessed Son of God was to take man's nature into union with his own divine Person, and in that nature to maintain the dignity of the most holy law ; and by obeying every precept of the same, and submitting to suffer the penalties of it, he was thereby to cancel the dreadful debt which sinners owed to God's justice on account of their sins. This (eternal thanks be rendered to our eternally blessed Jesus !) he, with all the love of his heart, covenanted with his Father to do and perform.

And, having in prospect, the glorifying of all the attributes in the Godhead by his obedience and death ; and thereby saving his elect from the dreadful effects of sin, and from hell ; he declares that from eternity, " He rejoiced in the habitable parts of his earth. and his delights were with the sons of men." The Holy Spirit likewise covenanted with the Father and the Son, that he would enlighten with his heavenly light, and quicken with his grace, all those who were chosen by the Father to salvation.

And that he would by his almighty power change the state of poor sinners, and bring them from that dreadful state, we have been describing, into open union with, and conformity to God. And by shewing them their misery, make them willing to come to Christ for mercy. That he would seal unto them the forgiveness of their sins, by an application of the blood of Christ to their consciences ; and by bearing his testimony that, “ the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.”—Thus did the Eternal Three enter into covenant to save sinners.—And, therefore,

Fourthly, we will consider, what this kingdom of God’s dear Son is, and who it is that translates us into that glorious kingdom. And it is a state of grace, in consequence of God’s eternal purposes. The Lord by his Spirit takes a poor sinner, whose state, as it has been described, is most dreadful by nature, and his body and soul fit only for eternal flames ; and translates him from this most awful condition, into a state of acceptance with all the enjoyment of God. And, the Lord Jesus being King of Zion, and the great and glorious Head of his Church ; he sets up a kingdom of grace in the hearts of his people, and rules and governs them by the sceptre of his grace and love. This state of grace, and kingdom of God’s dear Son, Paul tells us, consists in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The Lord Jesus clothes the soul with his own most perfect righteousness, which being imputed unto his people by God the Father, they are therein justified from all things, and looked on by him as perfectly righteous in this robe of the Redeemer’s obedience.

And by the application of the blood of Christ to their consciences, they enjoy peace with God, and a sense of his everlasting love to their souls. The joy of the Holy Ghost consists in his abiding presence with his people, and his testimony in the believer's conscience, of his perfect acceptance in the beloved. And, through a sense of this love in the heart, he enables the believer to go on from strength to strength, doing the Lord's will. He abides with believers, to give them to enjoy union and communion with the Father and the Son; and to lead them to fresh discoveries of God's love towards them, manifested in the great mystery of redemption.—Here we may take a view of man in his fallen state; and the wonderful change that passes upon him in regeneration. In the first, all darkness, ignorance, and hatred of God; full of unrighteousness. In the second, all light; (death being swallowed up in victory;) for the true light shineth into the understanding, heart, and conscience. He is made light in and by the Lord, and in that light he sees his own misery, and God's rich mercy. The soul that was really dead, is alive. The soul that was really dead to God; so dead, that all the threatenings of damnation could not rouse or awaken him to a concern about eternity, and all the sweet invitations of the Gospel had no effect upon him; when the Spirit is poured from on high, he is quickened up to spiritual life, and brought experimentally to know the power of God, who giveth sight to the blind, and looseth the prisoners; yea, the worst and most wretched of all prisoners, the

prisoners of sin and Satan, and he brings them out of the prison-house. The heart that was perfect enmity against God, now truly desires to love God above all; and to have ignorance, contempt, and rebellion against God, destroyed; and to have in their room, the law of God written in the heart; and the love of God shed abroad there, exciting the soul to run with delight the way of his commandments. This, as many of you as know God has thus dealt with you, calls for your highest praise. And the more you see and enjoy the privilege of this kingdom, the more you will have reason to praise God. Do you know what it is to enjoy peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord? Do you know what it is to have the blood of the everlasting covenant applied to your consciences by the Holy Ghost.

Do you know what it is to enter by faith into the holy of holies by the blood of Jesus? Then you cannot but desire to shew forth *his* praise, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

And, believers, your happiness consists in your knowledge and experience of these truths.

The more you are led by the Spirit of God to know your interest in Jesus Christ, and to enjoy the Father's love in him, the more the fruits of holiness will appear in your lives and conversations. The greater knowledge you gain, from the word and Spirit of Christ's love, the more will your hearts be drawn out in love to him.

Let it be observed, for the comfort of God's people, that a knowledge of Christ is given us, to support us under a knowledge of our sinful selves. And



a knowledge of our corrupt, wicked, deceitful hearts, is a reason why believers should apply to Christ every moment for strength to overcome sin and themselves.

And in this respect, it appears that Christ is a complete Saviour, because there is no sin, believer, which plagues thy heart, but he has promised thee strength against it. But we too often fight against sin in our own strength, and that is the reason we are frequently overcome. It would make for the comfort of the hearts of God's people, if they did consider how every doctrine of the Gospel enters deeply into the experience of a Christian.

As the doctrine of God's pardoning-mercy through the blood of Christ. Whoever does not receive the doctrine of Christ's atonement into his heart by faith; and endeavour constantly to derive comfort from it, cannot expect to be able to overcome his sins.

No motive can be urged, that is so prevalent, for a man to leave his bosom lust, as the love of God in Christ.

May you, who are believers in Jesus, be filled with all peace and joy in believing. *Amen.*

# SERMON XXI.

THE FAINTING BELIEVER REVIVED BY REMEMBERING THE LORD.

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JONAH II. 7.

*When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.*

**T**HIS book is to be considered by us rather as a history, than a prophecy; as it chiefly relates the Lord's commission given to his servant Jonah, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me." And herein a very particular account is given of the conduct and behaviour of the peevish Prophet, and his unwillingness to obey the Lord's command. As the wisdom of God is very marvellously displayed in the word, in the history of the Lord's dealings with men; so the Holy Ghost has thought fit to exhibit and set before us, in the Scriptures, the Saints of God, as men of like passions

with ourselves; and as their graces and spiritual excellencies are described; so their weaknesses, infirmities, and sins, are likewise recorded, to teach us that "all flesh is grass," to bring us off from trusting in man, and to let us know, that, "he that glorieth, should glory in the Lord." It may well be said concerning the Lord's goings forth in his providential dispensations, that, "He hath his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet." Or, as the Psalmist expresseth it, "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known."

God's providences are a great deep. We have a wonderful display of providence in this part of the scripture before us, which will appear to such as attentively consider the whole of it.

It is probable the Prophet had been, before this time, employed by the Lord in delivering his message to his own professing people, the Israelites; 2 Kings xiv. 25, and had found them to be an incorrigible and impenitent people; and might have seen but small success attend his ministry among them. In consequence of which he might reason carnally in his mind, and argue with himself, that he should meet with but a poor reception among the Heathens to whom he was now sent.

So that instead of obeying the Lord, and setting immediately about the performance of his work, by going to Nineveh; he rose up and went to Tarshish (which probably was a city in Cilicia) to flee from the presence of the Lord. It can hardly be

thought by us that Jonah, a Prophet, could be insensible that God was every where present by his omniscience; or, that he needed such questions to be put to him as were to the false prophets, who were among the Jewish captives in Babylon: "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I should not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" But the natural meaning of the words seem to be this: Tarshish, being out of the land of Israel, he left the land of Israel, where the Lord had made his abode, the name of which was, "The Lord is there," and where he appeared to his Prophets: and Jonah went down to Joppa, a sea-port town, and there found a ship going to Tarshish, which was to him, in his present view, a very particular and pleasing providence. This should teach us not to eye God's providence, to the neglect of his revealed and commanding will. So he agreed and paid the fare thereof, and went down into the ship, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord; that is, to get out of the land and from among the people of Israel, hoping that by being out of the land of vision and prophecy, the Lord would not renew his command, nor employ him any more in his service. But God's council and purposes cannot possibly be defeated. The Lord, to shew his displeasure against the Prophet for his conduct, in thus deserting the work appointed him, sent out a great wind, which occasioned a mighty tempest, so that the ship in

which the disobedient Prophet was, was like to be broken: which put the mariners into the utmost confusion and distress. They being, in their own apprehensions, in the utmost danger, cried every man to his god, to help and deliver them in this time of trouble. But Jonah, whose disobedience to the Lord's command was the cause of this horrible tempest, was gone down, like one wholly unconcerned, into the sides of the ship, and there lay fast asleep; till the ship-master, struck with his insensibility, came to him and said, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." The Prophet being raised up, the ship's company unanimously agree to make use of an expedient, to find out the sinner upon whose account all this evil had befallen them. The method proposed, was to cast lots; and the wise man observes, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." So the lot fell upon Jonah. Upon this, they proceed to inquire of him, What he had done? To which he gave them a faithful answer.

He informs them that he was an Hebrew; and confesseth his religion, that he was a worshipper of the Lord the God of heaven, whom he acknowledged to be the *Creator* of the sea, and of the dry land; and owns that this was his sin, that being sent to preach to Nineveh, he fled from the presence of the Lord. For this they reprov'd him, and inquired, what was to be done, to obtain a calm? "And he said unto them, take me up, and cast me forth into the sea,

so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you." "So they took up Jonah and cast him forth into the sea, and the sea ceased from her raging."

The consequence of this was, that the mariners being delivered from the danger of the tempest, were converted from Idolatry to the worship of the true God: which they manifested by their fear of God, by offering sacrifice, and making vows. "Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice, and made vows." Jonah being cast into the sea, the Lord's providence is at work about him. "Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish, three days and three nights." In this, and in other respects, Jonah was a type of Christ, in his death, burial, and resurrection. And,

First, in his death. He offered himself willingly to death to assuage the storm, chapter i. 12; and so he was cast into the sea, and swallowed up by the fish. So did Christ, to appease the storm and tempest of God's wrath. And as upon Jonah's being cast into the sea, it ceased from its raging, and the mariners were saved from drowning; so on account of the death of Christ, God's wrath is pacified, and believers are saved from the wrath to come. And as Jonah had sore conflicts and inward agonies of soul, when he was under the shadow of death in the fish's belly; so had Christ, when he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Christ felt unutterable anguish in his soul; his sufferings were inconceivable and unknown!

Secondly, Jonah was a type of Christ in his burial. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish ; so the Son of Man was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. And,

Thirdly, Jonah was a type of Christ in his resurrection. For as Jonah overcame all the difficulties and dangers he was in, and came forth again alive out of the fish's belly ; so did Christ out of the grave after three days. Jonah overcame great enemies, even the powers of sin, death and hell, and upon this sang praise to God, chapter ii. So did Christ triumph : " O death ! where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?"

And, as Jonah afterwards went and preached repentance to the Ninevites, with great efficacy and success, the whole body of them repenting upon his preaching with an outward, and many of them, doubtless, with a true, genuine, and spiritual repentance ; and so were saved from that present temporal destruction, and from eternal damnation ; so Christ, when risen from the dead, sent his Spirit, and preached by him, in the ministry of the Apostles not only to Jews, but to Gentiles also, as the Ninevites were ; and that with great success, so that " they glorified the word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

But, as my design is to give you an experimental discourse upon the words of the text, (I shall no further pursue the subject, how, and in what respects Jonah was typical of Christ, but go on to) and shall consider the situation and distress of Jonah,

which are beautifully described, in the chapter from whence our text is taken. In which the vehemency and fervency of his soul in prayer to God is discovered; which arose from his affliction, and which is metaphorically described as out of the belly of hell. “Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God (this shews that the people of the Most High can be in no case or state, in which covenant-union and interest do not continue) “out of the fish’s belly.” “And said,” in prayer, “I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me.” Astonishing grace! “Out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.” The distress and great affliction into which believers are sometimes brought, should not hinder them from, but should send them with the greatest importunity, to the throne of grace. “For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas, and the floods compassed me about; all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.” Here was, one would think, a state of as great distress as a real Saint could possibly be in. In this case, there was a great conflict in the Prophet’s soul, between nature and grace, between the flesh and the Spirit: the flesh was prone to despair. “Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight.”

But faith would still trust in God; though for the present under his severe hand, and all seemed to go against it: “Yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.”

The temple being a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, it intimates how the Prophet, by faith in prayer, looked unto Jesus as his Mediator, Intercessor, and



Advocate, to strengthen and encourage him, in hoping in the Lord his God, for present support and deliverance. He then again takes particular notice, and makes mention of his distressed situation. "The waters compassed me about even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapt about my head." By which he was brought into the utmost danger of present death, "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever."

The meaning is, I am in the sea, as it were in a strong prison, shut up and barred by the earth on all sides. "For ever"—unless thou dost miraculously relieve me. Yet from hence the Lord delivered him; and his deliverance he wholly ascribes to him. "Yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple."

From the cursory reflections which have already been made, we see that the Saints of God, such as are the truly beloved of the Lord, have their natural and sinful infirmities; and that they have their castings down, as well as their liftings up. And whatever has been the case with those Saints whose experiences are recorded in the word; may be supposed to be, in a measure, the case with some of the household and family of faith. God carries on his work in the souls of believers, in a very mysterious and wonderful manner, and promotes it by the means of his word and promises; by trials and temptations, by providential dispensations, and by

sore conflicts with sin and Satan. And he brings his people into no kind of spiritual or temporal distress, but he designs the real good of his children in it, and by it. Here, before us is a real Saint, a true Prophet; but in a wretched frame of heart, under the strong influence of carnal reason and unbelief; the command of his God seems at present grievous unto him; any other work than preaching is more desirable to him, and he seems to act as though he could and would oppose the sovereign will of God.

He is visited by the Lord himself for his sin of unbelief; and yet observe how God preserves the work of grace in the Prophet's heart; and draws it forth when he was in the utmost distress. He prays, and cries, unto the Lord his God out of the belly of hell; and we learn many blessed lessons from his experience. For by the Lord's dealings with him, we see, that the Lord will not cast off for ever. But "though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies."

In my further discoursing on these words before me, I shall endeavour,

First, to set before you how the real children and people of God, are subject to their fainting fits of unbelief, and what are the causes and reasons thereof.

Secondly, I shall endeavour to shew you how that, when the souls of God's people faint within them, it becomes them, even at such times, to remember the Lord. "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord." And,

Thirdly, that the prayer of faith, will be heard

by the Lord and answered. “ And my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.” Of these, as the Lord shall be pleased to assist, in their order. And,

First, I am to set before you, how the real children and people of God are subject to fainting-fits of unbelief, and what are the causes and reasons thereof. Here I might observe, that as ever since the fall, to believe in, and trust upon, the Lord alone, has been wholly supernatural ; so it has been as natural to distrust God, as it has been to be sinful. The first sin that ever was in the world, was unbelief; and there is more of unbelief than of any other evil, in all the sin that hath been, or is committed.

God forbid our first parents to eat of the fruit of the tree, which was in the midst of the Garden of Eden; and threatened that in the day they did eat thereof, “ dying,” saith he to Adam, “ thou shalt die.” Now, had they believed God’s word, that by keeping his command, they should have continued in that perfectly happy state, which by creation they were put into ; or, the word of threatening, that by disobeying God’s command, they should lose all the happiness they then enjoyed ; had they believed God in these words of his, they would never presume to have broken the divine law. Thus it hath been with all mankind ever since. If we consider sinners in their unconverted state, they do not believe the truth of what God by his word, hath declared concerning that state in which they are, that it is a cursed state, and that dying in it, they will everlastingly perish. Nor do they believe the word of the

Gospel, that there is everlasting life and salvation in Jesus Christ, for all that believe on him, and in him. And as it respects the real Saints of God, they have unbelief in them, as well as faith.

Wherever the Lord hath given faith, there is unbelief in the same heart conflicting with it. This was the case even with Abraham the renowned friend of God, and the Father of all that believe. What was it but unbelief, which put him upon going into Egypt? where he fell into the sin of equivocation, and mental reservation, to the hazard and danger of his wife's chastity.

Indeed, in the Scriptures, we find the Saints of God have failed in the exercise of those graces at times, which they were most remarkable for at others. Lot is preserved untainted, undefiled in Sodom; where the inhabitants burned with lust, which nothing short of God's raining hell upon them out of heaven (as one expresseth it) could quench; and yet, in the cave is overcome with wine, and ensnared with lust. Abraham has God's call, and promise that he will be his God, and yet in a time of famine, flies into Egypt, as before observed. Moses, that great favourite of the Lord, who is renowned as the meekest of all the men upon the earth, (and in which, doubtless, he was a type of Christ, who was meek and lowly in heart) was provoked in his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips; and instead of speaking to the rock as commanded, says to the people, "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?" Which shewed his unbelief, and mistrust of heart. The impatience of

his spirit, and his unbelief of the Lord's almighty power, are both very strikingly set before us. Numb. xi. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. There when the people murmured against the Lord, and complained on account of the manna, and even loathed it, calling it light bread, and lusting for flesh, the Lord says to Moses, "Say unto the people, sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, and you shall eat flesh, (for you have wept in the ears of the Lord, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt) therefore, the Lord will give you flesh, and ye shall eat," &c. "a whole month." It was given, indeed, in wrath; hence it is said in reference to it, "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul." But that Moses's faith was staggered at God's promise of providing flesh for so long a space of time, for such a multitude of people, and that in a desolate wilderness, appears from his reply to God. "And Moses said, the people amongst whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh that they may eat a whole month." Is this the language of faith, or carnal reason? He wants to be satisfied from the Lord, how, and in what way this is to be done? "Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them?"

And if this is to be done, what will they have to stock the land with when they get into Canaan? "Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?" He leaves out the flesh of fowls; and the whole of his inquiry shews his unbelief, as fully appears in the Lord's reply to him.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, is the Lord’s hand waxed short? Thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee, or not.” Numb. xi. 21, 22, 23. And it is made the quint-essence of all the evil of the murmuring Israelites, that, “they despised the pleasant land,” *i. e.* the land of Canaan, “and believed not” in God, and put not their trust in “his word.”

In David, the man after God’s own heart, we have a very striking instance of the weakness of faith, and the proneness of our hearts to unbelief; and that the Lord’s favourites are subject to their fainting-fits of distrust. David, a man beloved of God; chosen and called by electing-grace, whose heart had been warmed—whose affections had been inflamed—whose mouth had been opened to say, “The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this” uncircumcised “Philistine;” and who went forth in faith in the name of the Lord of Hosts, and through the power of God was made a conqueror—yet he, in a fit of unbelief and impatience, said in a way of distrust of what Samuel the Lord’s Prophet had told him, “I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul.” And this after he had received many signal and remarkable tokens of God’s love towards him, in his providential escapes out of the hand of Saul. And he fell into this fit of distrust and unbelief, after a most extraordinary providence and interview with Saul. He, indeed repents of it, and records it to his own shame, in Psalm cxvi. 10, 11.

“ I believed, therefore have I spoken. I was greatly afflicted. I said in my haste, all men are liars.”

And in the instance of the Prophet Elijah, we see much fear and impatience in him. He had been wonderfully provided for by the Lord, at the brook Cherith, where he was fed by ravens, who “ brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook.” He was after this provided for by a widow of Zarephath, in a time of famine, and was satisfied. He had the courage and boldness to face the king of Israel, and four hundred and fifty of the Prophets of Baal, and obtained an answer from the Lord to his prayer, whereby an incontestable proof was given that the Lord was God. And yet, this great man of God, when the idolatrous queen threatened his life, leaves the land of Israel, and the people who were newly brought back to God, and flees for his life; and that at a time when his presence, example, and advice, must be so greatly wanted. Now from these examples, together with this of Jonah’s, it appears, that God’s people are subject to their fainting-fits of unbelief. This will lead me to inquire into the causes and reasons thereof.

Certain it is, the cause is not in God, for he is the God of hope; his word is the ground of hope; and he is pleased with, and glorified by, such as hope in his mercy. All the vapours and mists which darken the heavens, obstruct the light of the sun and prevent its shining upon us, are engendered in and spring out of the bowels of the earth; so all our un-

belief, mistrust, and corruption, arise from our own natures, they are all engendered in and spring from our deceitful and depraved selves. "The heart" of man "is," saith the Lord, "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

This is discovered to us by the Holy Spirit in our first quickenings, when we are brought to see and feel, that in us, in our fallen nature, there dwelleth nothing that is good. But this is more manifested to us when we are brought to walk with God. Where the Lord hath begun a good work of grace, he will carry it on, and that in such a way, as shall be most for his own glory. The work of God in its beginning is not more wonderful, than in its continuance and progress, and the ways and means which the Lord is pleased to make use of, to bring his people through all to glory.

Sin is in all the children of God; they feel it; they groan under it; they sigh and long for complete deliverance from it. True it is, that in Christ they have complete salvation and deliverance from all sin; but they cannot enjoy this any further than as their faith is drawn forth into act and exercise upon the Lord Jesus. They have in themselves the whole of sin, a whole body of sin and corruption, and all their misery arises wholly from themselves; and at times they have great sights and discoveries of it. Old corruptions are sometimes permitted to revive, and new corruptions appear; and such evils are seen and felt in the soul, as the believer never could have conceived to be in him. Now it is truly marvellous, how God, under those sights and views,



and workings of sin, which he permits his people to experience, carries on their hearts invincibly to loathe, hate, and detest it. The believer is burdened with, but is not the worse for having a sight of his corruptions. In consequence of it he is secretly, and often to himself, imperceptibly, unbottommed from himself, forced more out of self, and brought to cleave more to Christ from what he knows of himself, than he did before ; by which means grace is strengthened in his soul. Under the working of sin, spiritually perceived and experienced, the believer is taught his continual need of Jesus : for sin is felt more in the soul, to the end that Christ's power may be more put forth, which illustrates that seeming paradox of the Apostles, " When I am weak, then am I strong." And, from seeing sin, in the light in which the Holy Spirit discovers it, the believer has an increasing and everlasting hatred wrought in his heart against it.

It is an evidence of real sanctification and growth in grace, when believers feel most of their sinful selves ; and nothing puts believers more upon watching over their hearts, and of being jealous over themselves, with a godly jealousy, than deeply experiencing their ruined, fallen, sinful, and corrupt selves. Yet, as it must be allowed that, such knowledge, though profitable, is not for the present pleasing ; so it is, at some seasons improved by Satan and unbelief against us ; and is a cause of our spiritual faintings and despondings.

There are times when the believer, in his own apprehension, sense, and experience, perceives in himself nothing but sin. He feels his own deadness,

the hardness and rockiness of his own heart; and finds himself to be wholly a fountain of corruption, and experiences that sin is a *living principle* within him; and then he will be apt to make awful and false conclusions concerning his state before God: under such apprehensions, his soul will be very apt to faint within him. He will find himself unable to pray, and unwilling to wait upon the Lord; and Satan will take the advantage, and work upon his unbelief all he can, in order to increase his guilty fears, to perplex his mind, and to bring him to doubt of the love of God towards him. And at such seasons, Satan will labour as much as possible to act as an Angel of Light, by bringing such scriptures to the mind of the child of God, and by his false glosses upon them, as will confound and distress him. He will now put him upon searching his heart, and ransacking his soul, for marks and evidences of grace, because he well knows he will not now be able to find them.

Such thoughts of God, as may serve to terrify him, he will endeavour to fill the mind with, and such sins as have been committed, and for which the believer hath obtained pardon through faith in the blood of the Lamb, he will bring to his remembrance; and if the child of God has recourse to any past experience, or any gracious intercourse he hath had with the Lord, Satan will now dispute it with him, and call in question the truth, and reality of it. So that such sights of ourselves, and such temptations and buffetings of Satan as these, may well be considered as causes of those faintings, dejections, and

castings down, which are sometimes the cases of the people of God. It is a great lesson, which is only to be learned in the school of Christ ; and it is wholly an experimental one ; how to distinguish between the workings of nature and the workings of grace—between the workings of sin and of holiness—between the encouragements which the Holy Spirit gives us, and the opposition of the devil against us. Satan's work is to distress us ; the Holy Spirit's work lies in comforting us. Sin is ever in us, and ever opposing grace, and grace in us is ever resisting sin. Now, our inherent grace is not a self-acting principle, but is drawn forth wholly by the grace and power of God. When believers are walking without the light of the Lord's countenance, when they do not experience the divine presence of God with them—and those gracious visits from the blessed Jesus which they have before now enjoyed—they have their castings down in consequence thereof ; and often their souls faint within them ; though, indeed, it is an everlasting truth, that the Lord never does, no not for a single moment, forsake his dearly beloved people, nor his work of grace upon their hearts. His withdrawing his sensible and comfortable presence from them, is for their real good ; for he teacheth them thereby to walk by faith, not by sight.

His giving them to see, feel, and experience more of their inward guilt, filth, and wretchedness, is with a design to make them more sensible of their need of, and to bring them to prize, the Lord Jesus Christ, his love, his righteousness, blood, and grace

the more. His permitting Satan to disturb, distress, and tempt them, is to teach them to look wholly to himself for succour, to trust wholly on his word for support under temptations, and to rely on his almighty arm, that they may be carried on safely and successfully to the confusion of Satan. The Lord by his word strengthens the work of grace—by his promises he draws forth the faith and expectations of his people to himself—by his Providences towards them he tries and exercises their graces, and makes a trial and proof of them both to themselves and others; and all his dealings with them are in mercy. Temptations serve to discover and prove the truth of grace; and Satan is permitted to attack the believer, that he may learn the need of making constant use of the shield of faith. Afflicting dispensations, and trying Providences, are for the weaning of our hearts more from this world, and for bringing us to set our affections more upon heaven and heavenly things. Those things that we call cross providences, are not properly and strictly so; for in every dispensation of the Lord towards us, the everlasting love of his heart, and mercy of his covenant, are discovered: for “all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth.”

Indeed it requires strong faith in God's word to believe this. We often eye God's dispensations with us and towards us, with an eye of carnal reason; and because they are contrary to our expectation, and oppose that, we call them cross providences; when in truth, Providence is but the execution of

God's purposes; and all of them, as they respect the people of God, are full of grace, love, and mercy. Having proceeded thus far, I shall,

Secondly, endeavour to shew, that when the souls of God's people faint within them, it becomes them, even at such times, to remember the Lord. "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord."

And as this is a proper time to remember the Lord, so our time of distress is a proper time for the Lord to remember us. It has been a saying ever since Abraham's time, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." And, as in nature, the lower the ebb, the higher the spring; so it has often been found in the experiences of the Saints, that after the lowest frames, and self-humbling views they have had, the manifestations of God's love have been remarkably great, and they have been mounted high in spiritual joy and consolation.

Indeed, this is one end and design of God in suffering his people to have great sights of what they are as sinners, that they, being by this means humbled, he may exalt them in his own due time, by giving them fresh experience and enjoyment of his love. It is becoming Saints, when they are in deep spiritual distress, to remember the Lord; whose love is everlastingly fixed upon them in Christ Jesus, and likewise his mercy, with "which he compasseth them about as with a shield." Such a declaration of grace as this, is very suitable at such a season to be remembered. "For a small moment have I forsaken

thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment ; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me : for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth ; so have I sworn that I would not be wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." These are precious words, and have often been the means, in the hand of the Spirit, of affording precious comfort to humble, broken-hearted and fainting minds. God is ever mindful of his covenant ; and one of his highest titles is, that, " He keepeth truth for ever." His people's cases are ever considered by him ; and there is no state or case they can possibly be in, but he hath made a proper provision for it in his word of promise : and having manifested his grace in making, he will magnify his grace in fulfilling, all and every one of them to all his people. There is in the word of God every particular case which can possibly befall a child of God, taken notice of ; and a promise of grace or support, as the necessity of the case requires, is there revealed. So that it well becomes the Lord's dejected ones, to read and meditate in the word of God day and night ; and to treasure up in their minds such blessed promises, as are most exactly suited to their present cases and circumstances. How blessed are those words from the

mouth of the Lord, to broken contrite ones. "Thus saith the high and lofty *one*, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." It is becoming the Lord's disconsolate and fainting people, to remember what the Lord is to them in the covenant of grace, in the love of his heart, and in the bowels of his mercy. "He changeth not." His love is like himself, invariable, without the shadow of a change. "I am the Lord, I change not," is a rock of support to fainting minds. It is well to consider, that the highest throne God has upon earth, is in the humblest heart, and that he *there dwells*, to revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones. A child of God need not fear, let his experience of himself be ever so humiliating; let his spirit be broken ever so much, with a real view of his spiritual poverty; this is only preparing him for, and fitting him to enjoy more of the consolations of divine love, and larger supplies of the grace of Jesus. It is well for God's people to remember, how he deals with all the vessels of mercy, and in what way, and by what means, the Lord reveals himself unto them; fulfils the good pleasure of his will in them and by them, makes good his word of promise unto them, and makes way for the fulfilling of it in them. The dealings of God with his people should be remembered for our present comfort and support.

God has but one way of dealing with the vessels of grace; and there is no temptation but all the

Saints are, at one time or another, liable to the same. Paul says, "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man (*i. e.* to all the brotherhood); but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation also, make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." There is one Saint or other whose case hath been exactly like thine, believer.

Yea, there is one or other of the children of God, who, now at this present time, experiences just the same as thou dost. The Church in the Lamentations was in a fainting-fit of distrust and unbelief, when she said, "My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord." And the means of her recovery was, by remembering the Lord, what he was as her covenant-God; "This I recal to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the *Lord's mercies* that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him." It is true, a Saint of God of old said, "I remembered God, and was troubled." But what remembrance was this? It was either remembering God in his transcendent perfections, in his holiness, justice, wrath, and vengeance against sinners out of Christ; to the neglect of considering, how Jehovah has magnified all his perfections, even his holiness and justice in the covenant of grace, in saving his people by the Lord Jesus Christ: or, it was remembering what blessed experience he had



formerly enjoyed, of the loving-kindness of the Lord towards his soul, and this not being his present case, he cries out with Job, “ Oh! that it were with me as in months that are past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon me.”

Yet this very Saint acknowledges, his unbelief and distrust were his infirmity, and the means of his deliverance was, by remembering the Lord, in his ways and methods of grace and mercy. “ I will remember the works of the Lord : surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.”

As it may be clearly made out from the word of God, that every one of the Lord’s people are exercised with temptations, so we might receive much spiritual advantage, by attending to the experiences of real Saints left upon record therein. And we shall find that their deliverance out of temptation, were by means of the word, and by their remembering the Lord. The Lord’s people cannot be brought so low, or be in any state, case, or condition, but it is their duty to remember the Lord; and their remembering him will afford them present relief. “ For the name of the Lord is a strong tower : the righteous runneth into it and is safe.” This brings me to shew,

Thirdly, that the prayer of faith will be heard by the Lord, and answered. “ And my prayer came in unto thee ; into thine holy temple.” As the Lord is a present help to his people in every time of trouble ; so it is the business of faith to apply and

have recourse to him for support, assistance, and deliverance. Believers can never be brought lower than Jonah was. "Out of the belly of hell," says he, "cried I." Nor can they possibly be in a more sinful frame than he had been in. And yet this does not hinder, but put him upon crying unto the Lord, and he heard his voice. As distress should drive disconsolate Saints to cry unto the Lord; so they should learn to remember, that the throne which they approach, is a throne of grace—that the God of all grace has erected it—that Jesus the Mediator is seated upon it—and they have all the encouragement, which God himself can give them, to come to it with boldness.

Shall I tell you a secret? I will.

Believers should never approach the throne of grace, without putting on the relation of Sonship, and Christ's righteousness. They should, by faith, consider themselves as the children of God, standing in that relation before him; and they ought to remember, that they are clothed, and divinely arrayed by the Lord, in the robe of Christ's righteousness, and in it are perfectly righteous before God. Oh! how blessed would it be, to go to the throne with a full persuasion and assurance of faith in this truth, that God is everlastingly well pleased with us through the life and death of Jesus! And that he is at perfect and eternal peace with every believer! We are often discouraged in going to the throne of grace: sometimes, it arises from the view of what we are in ourselves; and sometimes from the dullness and

deadness we experience in the duty. It should be considered by us, that as nothing in ourselves can possibly encourage us to hope in the Lord ; so nothing that we feel ought to discourage us.

Our encouragement lies in the word and promise of the living God which is always the same. Our salvation depends not upon what we feel and enjoy, but upon the finished work of God Jesus. And our security is not in our frames and feelings, but in the council, covenant, promise, and oath, of the Eternal Three. Here lies one principal cause of all our griefs and discouragements, in our attending too much to ourselves, and hearkening more to the reports of sense, than to God's infallible word of truth. Saints cannot always pray comfortably, but they always pray successfully. And there is often more real grace exercised in prayer, when we are most uncomfortable, than when we are most happy. The breathings of the soul after God, the secret loathing of ourselves for sin, the crying out, "Behold, I am vile !" is real prayer before the Lord. There is not a desire in the hearts of God's children after him, that is ever overlooked by him. He makes good his promise, that, "Before they call he will answer ; and whilst they are yet speaking he will hear." The temple at Jerusalem was a type of Christ ; and the Old Testament Saints looked towards it, to encourage their faith in the undertakings of the Son of God, in the covenant of grace. And believers, by praying in the faith of Jesus, and in a dependance upon his all-prevalent intercession, are

sure to succeed and prevail with God. Their cry, as well as Jonah's, enters the temple above, and the Lord sends them down a gracious answer.

May we frequent the throne of grace often, and in all our distresses, still call upon the Lord.—And may the Lord bless what has been delivered for his own glory. *Amen.*

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## SERMON XXII.

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PEOPLE, THE  
CAUSE OF THEIR ESTABLISHMENT AND PRE-  
SERVATION FROM EVIL.

PREACHED ON A NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

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2 THESS. III. 3.

*But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.*

**T**HROUGH the sovereign mercy of God we have been brought through another year, and entered upon a new one; which is a fresh instance of the almighty power and never-failing compassions of God towards us.

The Lord is the Fountain of Being, and gave being to all things in heaven and earth; and he is

the rock, the upholder and sustainer of all things, visible and invisible. He created all things for his own glory. Creation was an act of his sovereign will, a display of his power, wisdom, and goodness; and the preservation and upholding all things by the word of his power, is as great an act and display of Godhead, as the first creation of all things out of nothing, and commanding them into being. We received our being from, and are indebted to Jehovah for our existence, and the continuance of it. It is God who upholdeth our souls in life.

We were all of us brought into being according to the will of God, and have been continued in it to this present moment by the almighty power of God; and it is to answer some holy end and purpose. Not one of us but Jehovah hath some great design to answer by, and which we ought to attend to. God's end in creation is his own glory; and the chief end of man is to glorify God; and this ought to be our chief end in life and death. "To me," saith Paul, "to live is Christ." As you and I received our being from God, and are continued in a time-state to this present moment; so there hath been and is a marvellous energy of divine power which hath been constantly put forth towards and upon us, first to bring us out of nothing into being, and then in continuing us and conducting us thus far through the journey of life. We say, God is all act, and nothing but act, pure activity. "My Father worketh hitherto," says Christ, "and I work." As the Lord God formed the body of the first man of the dust of the

ground, and breathed in at his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul ; so it is by his constant breathing upon us, that our natural life is preserved.

We depend in every act of life upon God, “ For in him we live, and move, and have our being.”

You are assembled at this time to thank and adore Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for your creation and preservation ; to set up your “ Ebenezer” with wonder, gratitude, and praise, saying, “ Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.” You cannot look back on your past lives, but you find abundant cause for so doing. You cannot survey the present blessings, the generality of you are in the possession of, but it serves to be a motive to stir up and excite you to it ; being in general blessed with health and strength, and entered upon a new year ; and you have been and still are encompassed about with God’s mercies as with a shield. A believer in Christ carried through the past year, and entered on a new one, desires to set out afresh to walk with God as his (reconciled) Father, by faith in Christ Jesus ; who is the Lord our righteousness, our strength and our shield.

I have chosen the words of our text as suitable to comfort, encourage, and strengthen the real children of God, in their march through the journey of life. “ But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.”

I shall, as the Lord shall be pleased to assist me, endeavour to accommodate this scripture in the following manner :

First, by setting before you, the Lord's faithfulness to his people.

Secondly, by observing, what the Lord will do for his people ; he will stablish them.

Thirdly, How, and in what manner, the Lord will keep them from evil.

Looking on my text, as wrote by the Apostle, as a cordial for the people of God, and as containing a promise of the Lord ; I conceive it to be very suitable for our present purpose, being convinced that such as are the Lord's need comfort, and encouragement.

It may be necessary previously to consider, who are the Lord's, and who have a right to call Jesus, Lord, by the Holy Ghost. Sirs ! they are such as have been effectually wrought on by the Holy and Eternal Spirit of the Father and the Son, to see, know, and feel, that they are by nature the children of wrath ; that they have been and still are the subjects of sin ; that their hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked ; that in their fallen nature there dwelleth nothing that is good ; that nothing ever did or will proceed from it, but what is hateful and opposite to the nature of God, and deserving of his wrath and damnation. Such persons having been quickened, and made partakers of spiritual life in their souls, received from Jesus Christ, and imparted to them by the entrance of the Spirit of Life into them, these are the Lord's ; and they appear to be so, by being made partakers of the Spirit of the Lord ; by their being brought to know the Lord, and by their being desirous of being found

in Christ, not having on their own righteousness, but his.

Such being made alive by the power of the Holy Ghost, love God for his great love wherewith he hath loved them in Christ, and desire to walk before him unto all well-pleasing. They, through the gracious teachings of the Holy Spirit, take God in Christ for their present portion; go to him as their exceeding joy, and live upon him as their everlasting all, their endless fountain of joy, and their eternal inheritance. Christ is theirs, and they are his; united unto him by the bond of an everlasting covenant, loved by him with an everlasting love, which he gives them real experimental evidence of, by dwelling in their hearts by faith. Of this blessed number are some of you! It is the experience of some present, who desire to love Christ above all things, visible and invisible; to hate all sin perfectly, to live to Christ in all, to live upon him for all, to enjoy his presence in life, which you esteem better than the life itself, and to find him present with you in death, saying unto you, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, I am thy God." And your benefit, encouragement, and comfort, I have in my eye, as my present design in the subject before us. When you look back and survey the time you lived before you knew the Lord, and view his providential dispensations with you while you remained in that state, you cannot but find matter of admiration and praise. It may be you were prevented from falling into gross sins, and this was a most merciful dispensation.



When the Lord first opened your eyes, and influenced your minds with spiritual, heavenly, and eternal things, it was in a way and by means, little thought of by you; and if you have been five, ten, twenty, forty years in the kingdom of God's dear Son, you have found a variety of frames and changes in your souls. Some of us who have been in a state of grace more than twenty years, and though faint are still pursuing, cannot but adopt the Prophet's language, "O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:" "who holdeth our souls in life." For the maintaining, increasing, and preserving spiritual life in your souls, is the effect of the energy of God's almighty power; for as he first breathed by his Holy Spirit upon and inspired you with spiritual life; so it is by the continued breathings of the Spirit, that spiritual life is maintained. The same almighty power, which God put forth to create all things out of nothing, was put forth in your hearts, when you were made new creatures in Christ Jesus; the same power which is put forth to support all things visible and invisible, is every moment put forth in your souls to support the work of grace: which Elihu beautifully expresses thus:—"The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Beloved, to know by the witness of the Holy Spirit, that you are the Lord's, the objects of his love, the subjects of his grace, vessels of his mercy, whom he hath by regeneration, prepared unto glory—is that which sweetens life, removes the fears of death, and gives us encouraging hopes of being one day filled

with joys unspeakable, and full of eternal glory. You are at present in a time-state, the miseries of which are great and real. There is not one object, creature, or thing under heaven, can give us one moment's real happiness. One who had drunk the very quintessence of creature-comfort, confessed from better experience, "all is vanity: vanity of vanities; all is vanity." The inspired Apostle, John, gives this advice to young believers, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man (professor or profane) love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, which he reckons up, even the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world; and the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." There is nothing but Christ deserves a thought. There is no worldly misery deserves a sigh. The world is guilty before God, is full of sin and misery; and God hath called you out of the world, and separated you from the vain, sinful conversation of it; he prefers you before all the world, and Christ died to save you from the love of this present evil world. Yet, you being in the world, some of the miseries of it must befall you. It therefore becomes you to consider, that, as you are the Lord's by election, redemption, and sanctification; so your times are in his hands, and all that shall ever befall you, is according to his immutable and unerring will.

When you were to be born—of whom—how you

you were to be educated—when to be new-born—how long you were to live—what shall befall you in life—when and where you are to die—all those things are with God fixed, settled, and established by his decree. And nothing can possibly befall you, but it shall be for your benefit ; for God's providence is always in perfect connection and harmony with his promise, though it may not always be perceived by us. He hath said, " I will never turn away from you from doing you good ;" and he punctually fulfils his word to a tittle ; inasmuch as temptations, desertions, our own corruptions, the trials and afflictions which befall us in life, are appointed by the Lord for a most certain and glorious end, which is the increase of our faith, and the exercise of our hope, to promote the growth of grace, holiness, and sanctification in our souls, hearts, and lives.

First, " God is faithful," says Paul ; and his faithfulness here spoken of is, his covenant-faithfulness to his people, whom he brings into an open state of union and real communion with *himself*, his Son and Spirit ; and his faithfulness to his word is one of his highest royalties. His praise is celebrated for this, " He keepeth truth for ever." There are but three things on earth God peculiarly loves, and it is hard to say which he loves best, his truth, his worship, or his people. He esteems them as his jewels, his peculiar treasure, his delight. He has deposited them as his jewels in the cabinet of Christ, in and upon whose heart they have dwelt from everlasting. " Lord," says Moses, the man of God, " thou hast

been our dwelling-place in all generations." Thou hast been our shield against all dangers, and our security in times of trouble.

He never wanted a will to relieve us, nor power to help us, nor will he ever fail or forsake us. His eyes are upon the righteous always. From the beginning of the year even to the end of it, they are never withdrawn from them. "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." His people are the objects of his special care ; he is to them, " the God of their mercies," who is rich in mercy, who presents them continually with mercies ; yea, loadeth them with his benefits. He remembers his people with delight, and is ever mindful of his covenant ; and he cannot think upon his everlasting covenant which he made with his co-equal, co-eternal, and consubstantial Son, but he must remember his people also ; because it was made for their good ; contains all their mercies and blessings ; was entered into on their behalf by Christ Jesus ; it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the everlasting Gospel ; confirmed by the word of that God who cannot lie, and sealed with the inviolable oath of the blessed and Eternal Three. What we call the promises, upon which our faith is founded, and on which the Lord hath caused us to hope, are parts of God's covenant, and the giving full credit to God for the truth of what he hath spoken, and relying upon his faithfulness to make it good unto us, is as great a proof of our being interested in the covenant as can be given. Our every spiritual act, all the real experience we have of the truths of God in our own

souls, are so many evidences of the truth of God to us, in making good and fulfilling his promises to his people. Generally speaking, it is a common case with the called people of God, to look back on their calling—looking wholly on what then took place in their souls, as the chief, if not the only evidence, of their being effectually wrought upon by divine grace. Whereas, an attention to the spiritual experience they have since had, and now have, are, on proper consideration, every one, and all of them, as real an evidence of their being partakers of spiritual life, as their first conversion to God was. Therefore, beloved, I would give you this advice: Look not only at what the Lord did, when he first delivered and turned you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God ; but take into consideration also, how God has carried on his work in your souls ever since. Let your present experience be a handmaid to your faith. Look upon your spiritual breathings after God, your hatred against sin, your fighting in the strength of Christ against it, your quickenings in holy ordinances, your steadfast dependance upon Christ, his word and work, his grace and strength, and your cleaving with full purpose of heart unto him, as real evidences of your being born of God, and as blessed fruits of your conversion to the Lord.

If you have that spiritual wisdom which is profitable to direct you in this case, you will find all that you feel amiss in yourselves, your spiritual deadness and barrenness, which occasion so many complaints, and fetch so many sighs from your hearts, are, in

their proper place, proofs of spiritual life, as much as holy elevations. It being an evidence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, when we see, feel, and mourn upon the account of inward sin, lust, and corruption. An unregenerate man may complain much on the account of outward gross sin committed, but it is not after a godly sort; it is not from a view of what sin is in the sight of God.—But the people of God see sin in the light, and by the teachings of the Holy Spirit, and mourn for the very rising of it, and are troubled on the account of sin dwelling in them; and they have a measure of the same hatred in their hearts against it, which God himself hath, who hates it, as opposite to his nature, and contrary to his command, with an invincible, perpetual, and everlasting hatred.

God's faithfulness to his people is their bond of security, and is what supports and will for ever keep them. His word which he hath spoken is the foundation of their faith; and their simple, unfeigned trust in it, is an obligation upon God himself to make good his promise to all who put their trust in him.

There are some things in believers with which they are exercised, which serve to administer doubts to their minds; causing them to say at times, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious"—"my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God." There is sin in them, root and branch, and they feel it to the grief of their souls; through which, they are sometimes tempted to draw sad conclusions against themselves, thinking

that on account of their sinfulness, the Lord will withdraw his gracious presence from them, and leave them finally to depart from him. Also, when they consider their own meanness, they may be led to conclude, that God, who is in himself so holy, glorious, and immense, in his nature, being, and perfections, will overlook them, as not worth his notice and regard. It is true, these are temptations which spring from unbelief, and wrong thoughts of God. "For though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly." He is the God of his people, their own God, "keeping covenant and mercy for ever." He is "the God of all grace," who loves his people and will love them for ever.

They are the "blessed of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." There is a proper provision made for them by the Lord in the covenant, "which is ordered in all things and sure;" and the exceeding great and precious promises hold forth to the view of faith this gracious provision; and we are brought by the Lord, in the economy of his providential dealings, and gracious discoveries of himself, into such a state and case, as make way for his faithfulness to appear in the fulfilment of his word unto us. God's mercies keep pace with all our sinings—his grace with all our wants—his strength with all our weaknesses.

"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "My grace," says Christ, "is sufficient for thee." It is real grace to trust in God's veracity; to honour the truth of God by believing it; to expect the fulfilment of it in God's own time and way, and to be-

lieve the certain fulfilment of them to us in our souls and for our bodies, though all appearances make against us. "The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent : for he is not a man that he should repent." "Heaven and earth *shall* pass away ;" "but the word of the Lord remaineth the same for ever."

"The Lord is faithful." This, considered by us, is sufficient to strengthen and support our faith at all times. For though believers, you have still the same body of sin and death in you, and will, it may be, be exercised with the same corruptions, temptations, troubles, and distress ; yet God in Christ is still the same. Your everlasting friend Christ Jesus, is yesterday, to-day, and for ever the same, in his person, love, mercy, grace, work, word, and offices.

It is good for us closely to attend to the Lord's work upon us and dealings with us ; for all the real, genuine, spiritual experience we have got, is a testimony of God's faithfulness. Real experience is the fruit and evidence of God's truth. As you must expect the same trials from without and from within to befall you again and again, during your pilgrimage here below ; so, if you consider how the Lord has suited his grace and promises answerable to every case which can possibly befall you, on your march to the kingdom of Glory ; this will divinely encourage and support you. My friends, it is not so great a mercy, to have the knowledge of all that is contained in the Holy Scriptures ; as it is to have grace to make use of them for the very end and purpose for which they were given, which was, to



support the believer under his present burdens. Therefore it is sometimes a great temptation that befalls the Lord's children, that they are more intent upon reading of such parts of God's holy word as are not applicable to their present case, and overlooking such, as in a more especial manner are appointed by the Lord for their present benefit.

Believer, make use of prayer, to which do thou add close study and application to know thy own spiritual state, case, and condition ; then look into the book of God, and seek out such promises as are exactly suitable to thy present frame, experience and distress ; carry them in prayer to the Lord, and let thy faith be chiefly exercised upon them. This is the gracious provision thy heavenly Father has made for thee, and thou wilt find him faithful in making them effectual unto thee. The comfort, quickening power and grace, which God imparts to our souls, are by his word ; the Holy Spirit accompanying it to our hearts by his sacred energy. When it is given you to mix faith with it, then it strengthens, nourishes, and supports you.

By your eying this in your own particular case, it gives you an undeniable evidence of God's faithfulness to your souls. You learn from hence, that he will not forsake the work of his hands, that we have reason to "trust in the Lord for ever, because in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."—I proceed,

Secondly, to observe what the Lord will do for his people, He will stablish them. "The Lord is faithful who shall stablish you." This is a most blessed part of my text, it contains, and as

sures the believer, that he shall partake of a blessing which he much needs. For the enemies of God and his people are so many and great, the trials, temptations, corruptions, and miseries which believers labour under, are at times so different, that they much need to be established in Christ upon the truth. They much need to be strengthened and confirmed in the good work and ways of God; and it is their mercy, that the Lord hath undertaken this work himself, and promised to accomplish it. Many a child of God, who feels his need of this grace, is too apt to be discouraged by expecting it in a way, in which God will not always vouchsafe it. Among those who are really Saints, you will have some who have more knowledge of God by the word, and by way of spiritual wisdom and understanding, than by a way of spiritual inward revelation. So that such can pray, preach, talk, and converse, concerning the truths and doctrines of the everlasting Gospel in a most glorious manner, though it is not always in so experimental a way, as to suit with and be useful to Saints who know God and his Son Jesus Christ, chiefly by spiritual intuition and experience. Now such are apt to overlook and too much undervalue each other. The Saint who knows most of Christ by the Spirit's teaching in a doctrinal way, is apt to conceive there is no other way whereby God can or does establish his people, but in that very way in which *he* hath been established.

And, very often, through ignorance, he is led to overlook real experience, spiritual breathings, and high prizings of Christ, in Saints of a different size

from himself. The truth of the matter is this, we speak not against knowing and increasing in the knowledge of God's truths ; but that it is best for believers to speak, neither more nor less than what they really experience, and I would observe, that these truths can only affect our hearts, and influence our life, as the Holy Spirit teaches them to us, giving us to experience their power and efficacy. Regeneration is the best channel for the entrance of the doctrines of grace into our minds. A soul may be very holy ; yea, perfectly happy in God, who knows but little of divine truth, who being born of God is breathing after the Lord ; and such an one may, (for it is not only a possible, but it is a real case) enjoy more of God in a way of spiritual communion through the Spirit, than a believer who is more grounded and built up in a doctrinal way. Let this teach us to value God's work upon the soul, that we, perceiving it, may encourage others in their holy walk with God. There are some who go but a snail's pace, who walk though slowly, yet surely. Christ is their ALL IN ALL. No words can express their desires after Christ, their love to Christ, and how affectionately they cleave with full purpose of heart unto him. Though they are not able, it may be, to speak out what they feel and experience of the love of God in their own souls, nor describe the work of God wrought upon their hearts, nor tell the exact time when the Lord first wrought upon them ; yet this they can say, at least they feel, that there are seasons when their souls are spiritually refreshed with the thoughts of God's love towards

them, and delight in them. They sometimes find that Christ is in them their hope of glory, precious unto them ; yea, altogether lovely ; that to be found in him is the one desire of their souls. Such also find in their souls an irreconcilable hatred of all sin, and an inward struggle and conflict within them, between the law of the members and the law of the mind ; that when they would do good, evil is present with them. And they know too, what it is to be assaulted with temptations, to be at times without God's sensible presence, to be harassed, distressed, and sometimes overwhelmed, with Satan's suggestions, and with horrid blasphemous thoughts ; so that they are apt to think, and speak individually, No child of God feels as I do—surely none upon earth was ever in my case—if I am a child of God, “ why am I thus ? ” These dear lambs, who are as bruised reeds, and smoking flax, are everlastingly precious to Christ. He will neither break nor quench them. Yet such can scarce take comfort, when it is held forth in the word to and for them. When they hear more advanced Christians than themselves, talk so fluently of the things of God, and of their great confidence in God ; they conclude that they shall never be so confirmed and established in the faith as such persons are.

Now, my present business is with and concerning such. May the Lord bless, what I am about to deliver in his name, and from his word unto you.

Beloved, it is not a matter of eternal moment and importance to be a great believer in Christ, nor are all who look upon themselves, or are looked upon by

others, as great believers, really so. The weakest believer is as perfectly one with Christ, as safe and secure in him, as the strongest ; yea, weak faith is as great an evidence of personal interest in the Son of God, as the strongest. Some say, the strongest believer enjoys most of God. But, if you attend to what I shall deliver, (this will not,) whether it be a truth, or no, be any kind of stumbling-block or discouragement to the weak in Christ's fold. I would give this as an indisputable evidence of thy being a partaker of faith in the Son of God, if *Christ be precious unto thee*. It may be thou wilt hesitate. But, suppose Christ himself was present, and spoke to thee personally, calling thee by name, saying, " Lovest thou me ? " Thou wouldest cry out, " Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Nay, should unbelief prevail, I will put this question to thy heart :—Is it not thy desire, the real desire of thy soul, to love Jesus Christ above all things visible and invisible ? Thou answerest, Yes. Then I pronounce concerning thee, that, 'Thou art a child of God, an heir of glory.

Let me tell thee, grace in the heart, is better than light in the head ; and thou mayest be kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation, and enter the kingdom of heaven, without being able to understand the great and sublime truths of the Gospel.

I am now to shew thee how the text will serve to comfort thee, and in what way the Lord will fulfil this word of promise to thy soul, " Who shall stablish you." These words are held forth by Paul as a

divine cordial, and contain the Lord's promise, which he fulfils to thee, O weak believer! And, in this way and manner. Sometimes, by his Holy Spirit, he brings a promise to thy mind, lays it upon thy heart, draws forth thy faith into act and exercise upon it, and hereby thou art strengthened with strength in thy soul. Now this is one way in which the Lord is pleased to establish thee. He shines with his heavenly light, by his word, into thy heart, makes a fresh impression of it on thy soul, and it draws thy heart after God, and seasons thy soul afresh with a divine unction, and perfume of grace.—Again, it may be thou art in a tempted, tried case, almost ready to yield through the power of temptation; on a sudden, a scripture is brought home and applied by the Holy Spirit unto thee, which sets thy soul at liberty.

By this means thou hast an inward establishment of the truth and power of God, and of his grace and love to thee.

In an especial manner, the Lord is pleased to communicate himself to thee in a way of personal communion. The Holy Ghost falls upon thy soul, when, it may be, thou art engaged in thy lawful calling, and fills thy soul with such blessed thoughts of God, and Christ, as carry all before them. At such times thou art led into such tastes and enjoyments thereof, as lead thee to say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Lord in this way and manner deals with thee, and hereby thou hast an inward witness of the truth of God, and real communion with God.

In, and by this, thou art nourished up unto everlasting life, and established in Christ thy Head and Hope. To be established in Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost ; to grow into Christ, and to feel the life of Christ put forth in us, by the virtue and influences of the Holy Spirit of God, is the means whereby we “ grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” And all this is, by the influences and internal operations of the Holy Ghost in and upon us. There is another way which the Lord takes to stablish his people in Christ, his truth and promises ; and that is, by low humble frames, which fit them for high prizings of Christ and his salvation. The soul that God means to fill with a rich discovery of his love, he intends first to empty and humble. He brings down, in order that he may lift up. By sights of sin, by views of self-deformity, by contemplations on the immaculate purity and holiness of God, by discoveries of Christ crucified, and soul-admiring meditations of him—the Lord brings the soul into such a state and case, that he excites the soul to lay faster hold of Christ than ever ; and at such seasons, seals home divine truth upon the heart, with such an impression as cannot be forgotten, which establisheth them in Christ indeed !

Sirs, it may be, not one of us is at present fit for heaven ! But in what sense do I mean ? In this, we are not humbled enough—we must be very humble indeed before we enter glory. There will not be a proud thought there throughout eternity. When we are brought to be nothing in our own eyes,

nothing in our own aims and ends, then we are fit for the enjoyment of God in earth or heaven. “I dwell,” saith the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, “with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” I conclude this part of my discourse, by observing, that, an holy soul, who, though he can scarce talk rationally of the things of God, will yet at times find God breaking in upon him, and filling his soul with joy which is unspeakable and full of glory.—I proceed,

Thirdly, to shew how and in what manner the Lord will keep us from evil. “But the Lord is faithful who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.”

The Lord’s people are surrounded with a variety of evils within and without. They have sin in them, and it is the cause and fountain of all the evil and misery, which they at any time feel and experience. Their bodies are mortal, and subject to a variety of pains, sicknesses, and death. No affliction which the body is liable to, are Saints by any promise exempted from. The same diseases and deaths which befall sinners, befall saints also.

Satan, the evil one, endeavours sometimes to bring great evils upon them. When it is said therefore, the Lord keepeth his people from evil; we are not to understand it, as though the Saints of God were exempted wholly and altogether from evil. But the meaning is, God so disposes, sanctifies, and



blesse all things unto them, causing them all to work together for good, that they are more beneficial and profitable to their souls, than other things possibly could be. He never takes an earthly comfort from them, but he bestows a spiritual blessing in exchange for it. He never lays afflictions upon their loins, but with a design to bring them by means of them nearer to himself. Does he take the wife of thy bosom, the favourite of thy heart from thee; thy son, thy husband, or thy friend, who is as thy own soul? It is but to endear himself to thee, to make more room in thy heart for him, who, (take what he may from thee,) yet will never remove thee from his heart, nor take away his loving-kindness from thee. Thou hast the Lord for thy keeper, he has made thee his peculiar care and charge, he rejoiceth over thee to do thee good, and saith, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Isaiah xli. 10. But let us consider in what manner the Lord makes good his promise of keeping his people from evil, He keeps them from the evil of sin. Not but that they find and feel it in themselves, and are liable to partial falls into it; but he keeps them from being overcome by it, so as to be brought under its power and dominion. Though they fall, they shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth them with his hand. Again, He often keeps them from the strength and power of their corruption, even

when excited and stirred up by the devil; and though sin, it may be, hath been threatening to put forth all its power, the Lord most wonderfully counteracts it, and saves the believer from the commission thereof; giving him occasion to sing, as the Psalmist did, "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers, the snare is broken and we are delivered." Have you not experienced such a preservation from sin as this? When you have sometimes been in the greatest danger, from outward temptations, you have been miraculously preserved by grace, from being influenced and carried away by it. At another time, when you have been musing upon, and have been brought about to harbour Satan's temptations in your hearts, some blessed word from the book of God, hath occurred to your mind; and put you upon resisting Satan, and abhorring the very appearance of evil. And, when you have been overtaken through the deceitfulness of sin, have you not been recovered by the Lord's looking upon, and saying unto you, "I am the Lord that healeth thee?"

God's pardoning-mercy, manifested by the Holy Spirit, through faith in Christ Jesus, is healing. "Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Christ saves his people from the guilt, love, power, and dominion of sin. He has been made sin for them; and bore all their sins in his own body on the tree, by which the damning guilt and reigning power of them are subdued. And, he most gra-

ciously quickens his people, by the power of the Eternal Spirit, and saves them from the guilt of sin in their consciences by faith in his most precious blood; also, from the love of sin in their hearts, by the manifestations of his love to them; from the power and dominion of sin in their lives, by the almighty grace and renewings of the Holy Ghost; from the evil one Satan, by interposing between him and his beloved ones.—He has Satan under his feet, and has promised to put him under ours also. “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” They who trust upon the Lord, are upon the rock, and, kept by his mighty power, they shall not be removed.

Read, believers, the 121st Psalm, and triumph in faith over all present evil. You have the Lord himself for your Keeper, who promises, that, “the sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.” He undertakes to keep you from all evil. “He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and even for evermore.”

In this faith we may enter upon this new year looking unto Jesus, as God all-sufficient, to supply all our wants; as God Almighty, to uphold and preserve us; as our shield to defend us against all the attacks of our spiritual enemies; as Jehovah our banner, and our exceeding great reward.

May you enjoy his saving presence continually; may you live in more close and actual fellowship

with him than ever. May your souls and bodies be afresh devoted to the Lord's use and service; may you set out afresh to walk with the Lord, in the expectation of enjoying his blessed presence in life—his divine comforts at death—and the eternal fruition of his Godhead within the vail.

I close all with observing the remark, which Romaine makes upon our text, which is this:—“Here God promises to be faithful to his own work. Where he begins, he finishes. In believing this we are established, and kept from evil.”

May the Lord give you the sweet and blessed experience of the truths contained in my text. I add no more. *Amen.*

## SERMON XXIII.

**GOD'S PROMISE TO RENEW THE SPIRITUAL  
STRENGTH OF HIS PEOPLE IN THEIR WAIT-  
ING ON HIM.**

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**ISAIAH XL. 31.**

*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run and not be weary ; and they shall walk and not faint.*

**T**HESE words contain a divine, evangelic and gracious promise, given by the Lord to his dear people, for the increase of their faith, the furtherance of their joy, and the encouragement of their hope. The chapter that concludes with this scripture which I have chosen for my text, contains divine consolation ; and gives us a glorious description and character of the Lord Redeemer, as the Shepherd of his flock ; and treats of his essential deity, which is manifested by his omnipresence and omnipotency.

The Lord, by the Prophet, speaks to his Church and people, in the language of pure grace and consolation. “Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God.” God’s people and children, are

the objects of his everlasting love and delight, the subjects of his mercy, and the monuments of his sovereign grace ; and it is the good pleasure of his will, that their hearts should be happy, and their minds comforted. To this end, he opens to the view of their faith, the good treasury of his grace, causing his goodness and his glory to pass before them ; he speaks home to their very hearts, giving them to know the love, the great love wherewith he hath loved them ; and appoints the ministers of his everlasting Gospel, whom he fits and qualifies to speak a word in season to such as are oppressed and weary with the burden of sin, to speak good words and comfortable unto them. Jehovah holds forth everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, to his Church, in the following words : “ Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned : for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.” It is impossible for words to be fuller of consolation ! For they contain the spring, fountain, and foundation of it. The Gospel of the blessed God, the original of which, is the everlasting love of the Eternal Three towards the elect, which was manifested in the eternal compact between the divine persons in the incomprehensible essence, is here held forth and freely proclaimed. That covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure ; which has been carried into execution by the Son of the living God, who has been manifested in the flesh, contains a spring of divine joy, which is here opened to our view. The God and Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ having laid the sins of his people on Immanuel, and made him to be sin and a curse for them, proclaims the glorious fruits and benefits thereof. Pardon of sin, peace with God, victory over all enemies, are the fruits of Christ's most precious blood-shedding. With these the Gospel Churches of Christ are blessed : which are here foretold in prophecy ; and John the Baptist, and the Apostles of Christ plainly alluded to : He, as the messenger of the Lord of Hosts, crying out, " Behold, your God"—Jesus, the antitype of the sacrifices, " the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ;" and they, as employed in the same glorious work. Then follows an account of Christ in his divine pastoral office, with his love and gentleness in the discharge thereof. " He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the Lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." The Prophet then proceeds to give a majestic description of Jehovah the Saviour, before whom all nations are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity. His perfections flow from his essence, and his perfections are his essence. " The whole world is composed of an inconceivable number of atoms, and the sea of an inconceivable number of drops.—Now, what a little grain of dust is, in comparison of the dust of the whole world ; a drop of water from the sea, to all the drops remaining in the sea—that the whole world is to God. Conceive it still less, a mere nothing, yet it is all less than this, in com-

parison of God." There can be nothing more magnificently expressive, of the infinity of God to a human conception, than this expression of the Lord's by the Prophet. "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance." The sovereignty of Jehovah being expressed to confound idol-makers and worshippers, an address is made by God to intelligent creatures, to look and behold his omnipotent power, as discovered and displayed in creation, sustentation, and the disposal of the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, stars, and planets. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names." He knows their natural offices and influences, their order, motions, and all of them; the most glaring star, and the most glimmering. This exceeds man's knowledge. Philosophers cannot compute and give the names of the celestial Host accurately and minutely. The uncertainty of the opinions of men evidences their ignorance of their number: some reckoning 1022, others 1025, others 1098, and others 7000; besides those, that by reason of their mixture of light with one another, cannot be distinctly discerned; and others, perhaps, are so high, as not to be reached by the eye of man. Yet their names and numbers are all known by the Lord. "He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power not one faileth." Omnipresence respects his essence, omniscieny respects his understanding. He knows



his people, their names and persons, their cases and circumstances, their temptations and dejections; though they, through unbelief, may sometimes doubt of it, and for which the Lord seems to reprove them in the following verses. “Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding—He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength; even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.”

The text may be considered in the following manner as containing a divine promise, in which three blessings are expressed.

First, strength.

Secondly, an uplifting of heart in holy duties; so that the affections of believers are raised and mounted from earth to heaven—also alacrity, and

Thirdly, perseverance in the good ways of God.—These are, I conceive, the particulars contained in the words before us; which I shall, as the Lord is pleased to vouchsafe his presence and blessing, endeavour to enter upon, by considering, that the

words are a promise, and are directed to such as wait upon the Lord. “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.”

The eternity of Christ, is the foundation of the Church, and his infinite immense perfections the security of it. “Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly.” The best of mortals and the strongest of them, let them venture upon divine performances in their own strength, they shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

I begin, therefore, with describing those who wait upon the Lord to whom this promise belongs.

Such persons who have been taught of God the Holy Spirit, their exceeding sinfulness by nature, through the fall of Adam; who experience, by the divine, life-giving, enlightening, soul-quickenings operations of the blessed Spirit, in and upon them, the plague of their own hearts; the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the total corruption of every faculty of body and soul; and being taught by the same infallible *Teacher* their want of Christ; his worth and excellency, have been drawn by the cords of everlasting love to Christ for life and salvation—are the persons to whom the promise belongs, and who will find it made good to them in their own spiritual experience.

Such having tasted that the Lord is gracious, and found his loving-kindness to their souls better than the life itself, will wait upon the Lord in the means

of grace, for quickening, strengthening, and comforting grace, to be communicated by the Holy Spirit unto them.

God hath instituted the means of grace, and appointed instituted worship, for the spiritual benefit of his people. They wait upon the Lord in the use of the means, in faith, expecting to enjoy his life-giving presence. Having his command, "Seek ye my face;" their hearts reply, "Thy face, Lord, will we seek." Feeling their needs, they approach the throne of grace for a supply. Seeing their impurity, they constantly repair to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Having a deep sense, that without Christ they can do nothing, they cry, "Quicken thou me according to thy word." Believers wait upon the Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as their covenant-God. They approach the Father in the Son's name, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, and find it very good for them to draw nigh unto God. Their feelings remind them of their spiritual necessities, and God's gracious promises, encourage them in their addresses to the throne; for the mediator of the new-covenant is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." His person and mediation, his love and mercy, his grace and compassions, fail not. His righteousness is everlasting, his sacrifice is continually efficacious; he never ceaseth appearing in the presence of God as a lamb newly slain, and the Father heareth him always. The cases of his people he makes his own, he pleads all the causes of their souls, and makes

use of his divine intercession, and discharges his office of advocacy, suitable to the case of his Saints. This may serve mightily to strengthen and encourage their faith in him: He being with his Father, and their Father, his God, and their God. So that, though their corruptions, temptations, wants, and miseries may, in their view, seem at times to increase; yet this is sufficient support, Christ is always the same: "I am the Lord, I change not." And his whole office of priesthood in heaven, is for their benefit and consolation. In our waiting on the Lord, it is well to have an experimental acquaintance with our wants, and with the promises of God, as suited to our particular cases; with the knowledge of God's way and method in which he fulfils the promises unto us. In overlooking this, we fail in giving that glory to the Lord, which is most justly due to his holy name. Our eye is too often more fixed upon our sinfulness, wants, and miseries, than it should be.

The consequence of this is, we overlook the abundant supply of all grace in Christ Jesus, not considering, that God is able to make all grace abound towards us. Beloved, do you not find at times that this is your case, and experience? when you wait upon the Lord, you look more to your frames and feelings, than to the word, and promise? And that at times the thoughts of your sinfulness and unworthiness interrupt the exercise of your faith on Christ, your Saviour and propitiation? Sometimes you look barely at the word for strength and comfort, instead of looking to the Lord to put forth his power in the

word to quicken you. And, perhaps, it is as great a misery as befalls believers, they look for strength in their new nature, and finding it not, they too often wait upon the Lord without the expectation of receiving any thing from him. By regeneration we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus, being made partakers of the divine nature; not that God bestows any thing of the divine essence upon the soul; but, the new creature, or regenerate souls, have in consequence of their new creation, a likeness to God's holiness; grace hath such a relation to God, and he doth so delight to see this in his people, that, his whole end in election, redemption, and sanctification, (as to them) is to make them like Christ their Head, in conforming them to his moral image, in completing and making them unblameably holy before him in heaven: where their holiness will be perfect and immutable. Yet this inherent change, this divine renewing of the Holy Ghost, does not deliver us from experiencing the sinfulness of that nature we received from the first Adam, by means of our union with him. All that he was as a sinner inherently, that we are, and the best of us feel more of sin in us than we do of grace. Nor is the new creature sufficient of itself to grapple with the least temptation, or to oppose and overcome the least corruption. It is God who strengthens us with might by his spirit in the inward man, by which believers can do all things, and without it, nothing.

Strength to mount up to heaven as an eagle, to run our race without weariness, to walk without fainting, to combat difficulties without sinking, is

only to be had by waiting upon the Lord, who is the fountain from whence all this flows. Believers therefore, are not to look for strength from their new nature, but are to look for it in the Lord—in the Almighty Spirit, that first renewed them; because that glorious power is imparted to strengthen them, which was at first employed to new create them.

The text says, “they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.” It is blessed indeed! when the children of the Most High wait upon their heavenly Father with holy expectation. “My soul truly waiteth upon God, from him cometh my salvation;” says holy David. And again, “My soul wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him.” For though we believe not steadfastly, at all times, our personal interest in the everlasting covenant, yet “he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.” We should look steadfastly at God in Christ, through the promise, and take heed not to point out the means or the time to the Lord, when he shall fulfil them to our souls. We should learn to live by faith upon God, as revealed in the promises of his word, and declarations of his grace; and pray that it may be given us, to mix faith with his word, that we may grow thereby. Ever remembering, that nothing can possibly interrupt our confidence in the Lord, but legality and unbelief. Here is God’s promise of strength made to such as wait on him, and it cannot be broken, it must be fulfilled. The way in which it is fulfilled is, by the Lord’s putting forth the mighty power of his Holy Spirit in the souls of his people, strengthening them to cleave

with full purpose of heart to Christ alone, filling their souls with renewed strength, by the applications of divine promises to their hearts. It is God's promise to his waiting people, and they do well to consider, that it is made good to them in the means of grace, both private and public. Often in secret prayer, the Holy Spirit falls upon thy soul, enlarges thy heart, and makes thee glad with the shine of his countenance upon thee. At another time, it may be, thou art engaged in spiritual meditation, and such thoughts of Christ, and views of the Father's love, are suggested to thy mind, and represented to thy faith, as fill thee with holy joy. There are seasons when to thy sense and view, thou art bewildered, and knowest not what to make or think of thy own experience; all is dark, distressing, and uncomfortable. It may be thou darrest up thy heart in secret inward desires to the Lord, thou canst scarcely, as thou conceivest of it, call it prayer; yet the Lord takes notice of it, and sends thee some message from his word, either in the public ministry of it, or by leading thee to have recourse to such a portion of it as exactly suits thee; hereby thy spiritual strength is renewed, and thou findest thyself strengthened with strength in thy soul. "It is a general case for the people of God, either to lay too great a stress and dependance on the means, or to get above and undervalue them; or to look for that in them, which can only come from the Spirit of Christ, working mightily in them upon the souls of his people.

It is one part of the Spirit's teaching, to lead us in the use of all means to the Lord; to seek after com-

munion with God in them, and to value them as ordinances of divine appointment, in which Christ has absolutely promised his divine presence: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." The way and means in which Saints have communion with God, are all those spiritual outgoings of their souls, in the exercise of holy desires, fervent breathings, vehement affection, flaming love, expressed in the exercise of faith upon God in Christ: which are drawn forth, in solemn prayer and praise, in hearing the word, and at the celebration of Christ's sufferings, blood-shedding, sacrifice and death, at the holy table of the Lord. In the use of which means it pleaseth God oftentimes, to fulfil this promise before us to his people.

But I proceed, secondly, to consider the next blessing in the text promised by the Lord, to such as wait upon him. *Viz:*

A divine uplifting of heart. "They shall mount up with wings as eagles;" and also, alacrity—"They shall run and not be weary."

This divine uplifting of heart in holy duties, is represented under a metaphor, "They shall mount up with wings as eagles." Eagles mount and fly aloft in the firmament, and one sort of them, as naturalists say, can look steadfastly at the face of the sun.

As the allusion is to their swiftness in flight, and their soaring high; so it directs us to observe, that



believers in Christ under the influences of the Lord the Spirit, are mounted up in the exercise of faith and heavenly meditation from earth to heaven, from things temporal to things eternal; and have such amazing sights and discoveries of Christ, the everlasting Sun of Righteousness, as refresh their Spirits, inflame their souls, spiritualize their hearts, causing them to look on all terrestrial things with holy indifference; and to count all things but dross and dung, in comparison of Christ Jesus their Lord and Saviour, their Head and Hope. It pleases God to give his Saints, by the irradiations of his spirit and personal communion with him, a solid, inward, experimental knowledge of the most dazzling, deep, and high mysteries of grace. They are lifted up by the Spirit of the living God, on the wings of faith, love, and holy desire, into the mount of fellowship and communion: by which they enjoy such soul-refreshing, heart-reviving views of the freeness, fulness, sovereignty, and immutability of grace, as cause them to break forth into singing, and to triumph in Christ over all sins, enemies, and difficulties. So then here we see how God fulfils his promise. It is by spiritualizing the affections of his people, raising them up within the veil, fixing them for a season upon those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Do you not, ye children of the Most High, find the truth of this, in your own souls, at times? And, that this is really your case and blessed experience? For, are not your souls at some seasons divinely impressed with

heavenly things? Many a time this is the case with Saints.

They enter upon holy duties without any sweet frame; yea, with great dulness and deadness; and whilst engaged, the Holy Spirit, in the distillations of his grace falls upon their souls, and draws forth their faith into act and exercise upon Christ Jesus. At other seasons, it may be, during an ordinance, they have throughout it no sensible fellowship and communion; and yet at such times, perhaps, by what hath been contained in the ordinance, (which, as far as it is of God and consistent with his revealed truth, the Holy Ghost will always, sooner or later, set his own seal to) believers have reaped spiritual benefit, though not always accompanied with great and remarkable upliftings. Let me express myself here, by declaring what is the common experience of God's children, and how he deals with them, and yet fulfils his truth. It is the general case, that they do not experience, nor are they to look for, any remarkable elevations of soul in public ordinances, nor always in one and the same way.

The Lord exercises them with an holy variety, discovering thereby his gracious sovereignty. This is commonly the real case and experience of the called people of God, as it respects public instituted worship; they find the chief and principal design of it is, to instruct and inform them into the knowledge of divine things. By the use of the means, they are led to know the person and work of Christ, are directed to apply to him continually,

as their cases require. They are encouraged so to do, from the express mention of his sacred promises. Often their cases are opened, their experiences explained, their temptations discovered, and Satan's wiles and stratagems detected. God's people find this benefit from the means; Christ being preached, their cases stated and directions given, the Holy Spirit makes an application thereof, and they are secretly, inwardly, and sometimes imperceptibly, strengthened and encouraged. When public ordinances are finished, God's people ruminating on what hath passed between Christ and their souls, and what God the Lord hath spoken to them in and from his word, have matter for their faith to feed upon, and meditation to digest. It frequently lays a good foundation for high communion, and strong consolation, which they often enjoy in sweet spiritual meditation, and secret prayer; which generally is the greatest discovery and best evidence of their growth in grace, and of their benefitting by divine institutions.

So, likewise, as it respects solemn private prayer, and secret communion with the Lord, a believer is sometimes wind-bound, shut up in his frame, cannot go forth in the exercise of faith and love, because the comforter which should relieve his soul is departed from him. Yet, even at such a season, he has communion with the Lord. Nay, I affirm it upon the authority of truth, more real fellowship and communion is carried on, on such occasions, than when more comfortable frames are enjoyed. This is discoverable in the vehement requests, the internal and inwrought prayer of the heart, which is

offered up by the energy of the spirit, and is highly acceptable to the Lord. It is a common mistake with us, to confine our apprehensions of communion with God, to spiritual joy, and comfortable frames; forgetting this important and experimental truth, that some of the chiefest discoveries of grace, and of the exercise of it upon the Lord, in actual fellowship with him, are, when we have the least spiritual enjoyment. Shall I intreat you to guard against mistakes, and learn to distinguish between spiritual dispositions and natural affections—between supernatural upliftings and natural exertions? Believers have their commons and exceedings. They are commonly evenly upborne by faith in Christ as set before them in the word and promise of God. They mount up with wings like eagles, every time their hearts are encouraged in the Lord, their hopes strengthened, their fears removed, and their doubts resolved. And they have also their elevated frames, when the Holy Ghost by his divine illapses is pleased to raise up their hearts on high, directing them, as with a straight line, into the enjoyment of the love of God, filling their minds with a real sense of it, and making Christ present to their faith; so that they, for a season, actually taste on earth the joys of heaven. Such are blessed seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord; and give cause to cry out, “Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied, with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.” I pass on,

To consider the alacrity of believers in God's good ways, here promised. "They shall run and not be weary." This is the fruit and effect of their being strengthened and uplifted by the Lord. Spiritual quickening, upliftings, and consolations, renew believers and recover them; so that sometimes, their spiritual joy, comfort, and strength, liveliness, and activity, are as in the day of their espousals, in the youth of first conversion. This part of the promise is expressive of the divine celerity and alacrity of believers under divine impulses and influences, in running their race, having Jesus, the mark in view, and heaven as their home, and everlasting habitation in expectation. The believer has a body of sin; legions of lusts; armies of enemies to oppose, resist, and overcome; the least of which is too strong for him without Christ; the strongest of them he is more than a conqueror over in Christ; and as he lives and walks by faith in Jesus, he overcomes all his enemies. Here is strength promised him, which he is to receive out of Christ's fulness, whereby he mounts up to heaven as the eagle doth, lives in sights and views of the Lord his righteousness, and is filled with holy zeal and courage, to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life; the prize of the high calling which is held up, and held forth to such as are fighting the Lord's battles; which they are to look to as the recompense of reward; which they lay hold on by faith, believing their interest in it, their right to it, and that they shall enjoy it. Christ is their captain; sin, self, Satan, and the world, are their enemies. This

world lies in their road to the kingdom of glory ; they press through all dangers and difficulties, and run with patience the race that is set before them, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith ; who for the joy, that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Nothing is more encouraging and conducive to the believer's alacrity in spiritual things, than the inward experience he has of God's goodness to his soul.

Every time the Lord is pleased to refresh the souls of his people, with actual fellowship with him, and with his Son Jesus Christ, they are excited to set out, as it were, afresh for heaven. " They shall run and not be weary."

Continued strength, and that equal to the day of trials, temptations, dangers, and distresses, is here proposed and actually promised ; and it is truly and really enjoyed in the souls of believers, by the power of the Holy Ghost, who, putting forth his mighty power in the quickening influences of grace in the inward man—there is an actual growing " strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." I cannot conceive a greater blessing in experience, than to be instructed into, and made acquainted with, the internal operations, the life-giving, and faith-strengthening influences of the Holy Spirit in the souls of the regenerate. He works in their souls an invincible hatred to all sin, withholds them from the power of evil, supplies them with the constant

influences of grace, waters their souls with dews from the everlasting hills : and when they are, in their own feeling, sense, and apprehension, most weak and strengthless, he makes them strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. The weakest of them he makes as David, and the house of David as God, as the angel of the Lord ; so that in Christ believers do valiantly in fight, they turn to flight the armies of sin, Satan, death, and hell, which oppose them. I conclude, with the

Third particular, the perseverance here promised, "They shall walk and not faint." This shews that our perseverance in grace to the end, is infallibly secured by God's holy promise. It is great grace to be brought to know the Lord, to be brought to believe in the Lord, to walk with him, and to walk before him, to his praise and glory. To continue going on from strength to strength, and to be as the Sun, when he goeth forth in his might, is great grace indeed ! And yet, all this is promised, and it all depends upon God's faithfulness to his word and work. The Lord himself hath engaged to work all his own work in us, and for us, to perfect what concerns us, to hold up our goings in his ways, to be our Sun and Shield, our God and Guide, even unto death—that he will never leave nor forsake us, nor turn away from us from doing us good ; and that he will put his fear in our hearts, that we shall not depart from him : and he is faithful that has promised. It is here declared, that, God's people shall walk on from strength to strength, and not faint.

The way of a believer's walk, is Christ ; he is the

way to the Father, and to all grace and glory. "I am the way," saith Jesus. Hence, says holy Mr. Erskine, "Holiness is not the way to heaven. Christ is the way, and holiness is the walk." Christ being the way; so our life is a life of faith, and our walk is a walk of faith. "We walk," says the Apostle, "by faith, not by sight." The believer's walk with God is a spiritual walk, consisting in a dependance upon God for every blessing he needs, expecting to receive them, only because the Lord has promised them.

The Holy Spirit leads the believer to know, that Christ and he are one, that the Father is at perfect peace with him, and has accepted him in the beloved; that he stands completely justified and pardoned through the obedience and atonement of the immaculate Lamb, and that there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. From this knowledge springs faith and love, the fruit of which is manifested in living to God, and walking before him. And the life received by the believer from the Spirit of Christ, is an incorruptible and immortal principle. Hence, says our Lord, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." This life is imparted, continued, and maintained in a believer's soul, with all its comforts and blessings, by the Lord the Spirit; who increases, strengthens, and carries on his work in the souls of believers, by his own divine power and agency, teaching them to walk in the pleasant paths of soul-justification before the Lord, by faith exercised on the most glorious, consummate, and divine obedience of Christ, which



is imputed, and in which believers are adorned; conducting them also into the chambers of divine fellowship, giving them to partake of joys which are inexpressible, and a foretaste of bliss which is inconceivable: and in Christ their way, they walk by his direction with growing delight and increasing joy. Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, their feet being firmly fixed on him, he going before them as their leader, and behind them as their rearward, they are invincible—more than conquerors—“bring forth fruit in old age,” and “flourish in the courts of the house of our God.” And all to prove, “that the Lord is upright,” faithful to his covenant-promise, and mindful of his people. “They shall walk and not faint.” Their race being run, and their battle being ended, they are dismissed from the tabernacle of the body, and have provided for them, “an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” I conclude with the words of Romaine, “What a promise? Renewed strength to mount upwards in heart, to run our race through the world, and to go on, persevering to the end.”

May the Lord bless what has been very weakly and imperfectly delivered unto you from this scripture, and own it, as far as may be, for his glory and your good. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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